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ABSTRACT

An investigation of the process for career progression in the federal white-collar work force examined the nature and extent of any barriers women may confront in that process. It included data from three sources: U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Central Personnel Data File; 19 focus groups with 144 senior level and senior executive men and women; and a government-wide survey mailed to a sample of 13,000 employees (8,408 returns). Findings indicated that women confronted inequitable barriers to advancement in their federal careers. Barriers took the form of subtle assumptions, attitudes, and stereotypes that affected how managers sometimes viewed women's potential for advancement. Women were not promoted at a lower rate than men at the GS/GM 13 level and above, but rather faced obstacles to advancement at lower levels. Women received performance appraisals that were as good as or better than men's, and women expressed just as much commitment to their jobs and career advancement, although women were often perceived to be less committed. A significant minority of women believed they were confronted by stereotypes that cast doubts on their competence. Minority women appeared to face a double disadvantage. Recommended actions included a reaffirmation of the government's commitment to equal opportunity and opportunities for women to increase their competitiveness and demonstrate their abilities. (The survey and two data tables are appended.) (YLB)

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A QUESTION OF EQUITY

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Women and the GLASS CEILING

CE 063 622

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A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States
by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

Transmittal Letter

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
Washington, D.C. 20419

October 1992

Sirs:

In accordance with the requirements of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, it is an honor to submit this Merit Systems Protection Board report entitled "A Question of Equity: Women and the Glass Ceiling in the Federal Government."

While almost half of white-collar employees in the executive branch are women, only about one in ten senior executives is a woman. This report examines the reasons that so few women are in top-level positions in the Civil Service.

Only some of the imbalance between men and women in higher grades can be explained by differences in the amount of education and years of Government service. Women also face unfounded stereotypes and assumptions about their abilities and job commitment that serve as subtle barriers to their advancement. The report discusses these barriers and offers recommendations for ways to achieve greater equity for women.

We believe you will find this report useful as you consider issues concerning the effective management of Federal employees.

Respectfully,

Daniel R. Levinson
Chairman

Antonio C. Amador
Vice Chairman

Jessica L. Parks
Member

The President
President of the Senate
Speaker of the House of Representatives

A Special Study

A QUESTION OF EQUITY:
Women and the Glass Ceiling in the Federal Government

A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

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The findings of this study are based on survey data and analyses of workforce statistics. The findings are not legal conclusions and do not establish or suggest legal violations by, or create legal rights or liabilities against, any officer or entity of the Federal Government.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women are an integral part of the Federal workforce, holding nearly half of white-collar jobs in the Government. Yet they still hold a small percentage of senior-level and executive positions in the executive branch. Is the poor representation of women in higher graded jobs due to the existence of a glass ceiling? That is, are there subtle barriers, bearing no relationship to women's career decisions or qualifications, which limit their advancement? Or do men continue to dominate senior positions because they have more experience, more formal education, and greater commitment to career advancement than women? The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board sought to answer these questions in this study of career advancement in the Federal Government.

The Board found that barriers do exist that have resulted in women, overall, being promoted less often over the course of their Government careers than men with comparable education and experience. Women are promoted at a lower rate than men in grade levels and occupations that are important gateways to advancement. The women we surveyed express the same level of commitment to their jobs and careers as men, and women receive the same or better performance ratings as men, but their potential for advancement is often underestimated by managers using criteria which they traditionally have seen as a way to measure job commitment and advancement potential. A significant minority of women also believe they are confronted by stereotypes which cast doubts on their competence.

The Board suggests that because advancement to senior levels is a slow process, the imbalance in the percentage of women in high grades can be corrected within a reasonable timeframe only through concerted action. Recommended actions include a reaffirmation of the Government's commitment to equal opportunity, including ensuring that recruitment for senior positions is broad enough to encompass sufficient numbers of qualified women. The Board further recommends that managers make opportunities available for women to increase their competitiveness and demonstrate their abilities, actively discourage expressions of stereotypes of women at work, and reassess the validity of the criteria they use to evaluate an employee's potential for advancement.

Almost as many women as men are now employed in white-collar jobs in the Federal executive branch, yet only about 1 out of every 4 supervisors and 1 out of every 10 executives are women. Studies outside of the Federal Government have shown that women at work often face subtle barriers—or what has come to be known as a "glass ceiling"—which constrain their career advancement. If such barriers exist in the Federal sector, the Government is paying a cost. It is underutilizing a major segment of its human resources and delaying attainment of an important goal of the Civil Service Reform Act; i.e., full representation of all segments of society at all grade levels in Government.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB or the Board) has the statutory responsibility to report periodically to Congress and the President on the health of the Civil Service and other merit systems. In partial fulfillment of this responsibility, MSPB undertook an analysis of career advancement in the executive branch workforce. The study described in this report was designed to examine the process for career progression in the white-collar workforce, and the nature and extent of any barriers women may confront in that process. It included data from three sources: the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Central Personnel Data File; focus groups of senior level (GS/GM 13-15) and senior executive (Senior Executive Service or SES) men and women; and a Governmentwide survey mailed to a sample of 13,000 employees in grades GS/GM 9-15 and the SES. A subsequent study will address any barriers which may confront minorities in the executive branch workforce.

Findings

- Women do confront inequitable barriers to advancement in their Federal careers. These barriers take the form of subtle assumptions, attitudes, and stereotypes which affect how managers sometimes view women's potential for advancement and, in some cases, their effectiveness on the job.

- Contrary to conventional wisdom, women are not promoted at a lower rate than men at the GS/GM 13 level and above, but rather face obstacles to advancement at lower levels in the pipeline. Women in Professional occupations are promoted at a lower rate than men at two critical grades, GS 9 and GS 11. As these grades are the gateway through which one must pass in moving from the entry level to the senior level, this disparity has the effect of reducing the number of women eligible for promotion in higher graded jobs. Results from a Governmentwide survey of employees currently in grades GS 9-15 and the SES confirm that women at these levels have been promoted, on average, less often over the course of their Government careers than men who have comparable amounts of formal education and experience, and who entered Government at the same grade levels as the women.

- Given current trends, the percentage of Professional and Administrative jobs held by women will grow from 34 percent in 1990 to 42 percent by 2017. But even by 2017 women will remain significantly underrepresented in senior levels, holding less than one-third of senior executive positions. Unless action is taken, a dramatic increase in the representation of women in higher graded jobs will be precluded both by the slow process of advancement into higher graded jobs in general, and by the lower rate of promotion encountered by women.

- Women receive performance appraisals that are as good as or better than men's, and women surveyed expressed just as much commitment to their jobs and career advancement as men. However, there is evidence to suggest that women are often *perceived* to be less committed to their jobs than men. Particularly susceptible to this misperception are women in the first 5 years of their careers and, throughout their careers, women with children, who are promoted at an even lower rate than women without children.

- A significant minority of women in grades GS 9 and above believe they often encounter stereotypes that cast doubts on their competence, and that attribute their advancement to factors other than their qualifications.

- Minority women appear to face a double disadvantage. Their representation at top levels is even less than that of nonminority women, and minority women currently in grades GS 9 and above have been, on average, promoted less often than nonminority women with the same qualifications.

Recommendations

1. **The Government should reaffirm its commitment to equal employment opportunity and agencies should make special efforts to increase the representation of women in senior positions in the civil service.** Because women are found in a minority of Professional and Administrative jobs above the midlevel, and because career advancement is slow above this level, agencies should make special efforts to ensure that women and, in particular, minority women, are included in the applicant pool.

2. **Managers should evaluate the formal and informal criteria they may be using to evaluate employees' potential for advancement, especially when these criteria are used in making selections for developmental training, career-enhancing work assignments, and promotions.** Managers should consider whether they are using criteria for evaluating employees' commitment to the job and potential for advancement that have little or no relationship to the quality of the employees' work or actual job requirements. Decisions about whom to develop should be based on an employee's qualifications, performance, and *expressed* desire for advancement. Managers need to recognize that results obtained are more important than the numbers of hours of overtime worked.

3. **Managers should seek to curtail, within themselves and their organizations, any expressions of stereotypes or attitudes which may create an environment hostile to the advancement of women.** Managers should encourage an environment conducive to the advancement of women by reexamining their own and their subordinates' attitudes and deportment, and actively discouraging expressions of stereotypes or behavior that reinforce negative stereotypes of women at work. Managers can further help to allay these stereotypes by giving qualified women opportunities to demonstrate their abilities in assignments traditionally thought to require male attributes.

4. **Women should take full advantage of opportunities to increase their competitiveness and demonstrate their abilities, and agencies should make these opportunities available.** Women, individually, can increase their potential for advancement by pursuing additional education and developmental programs available within the Government. Agencies should also actively ensure that women have access to developmental programs and other opportunities to augment their qualifications and demonstrate their abilities.

5. **Agencies should conduct their own assessment of barriers to advancement for women.** The results of this study are based on a Governmentwide view of the career advancement process and do not capture the diversity that is certain to occur among agencies. Agencies should use the broad findings of this report to develop specific assessments of barriers which may be impeding the advancement of women within their own organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, there has been a significant growth in the number of women employed by the Federal Government. The percentage of white-collar, executive branch jobs held by women grew from 41 percent in 1974 to 48 percent in 1990. The importance of women in the Federal workforce will continue to grow. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the number of women in the national workforce will increase by 26 percent between 1990 and 2005[1] and women's representation in the Federal workforce has been increasing at a faster rate than their representation in the national workforce.

But while women now comprise nearly half of the Federal white-collar workforce, their distribution by grade level and occupation remains disproportionate. Although the numbers of women in midlevel and upper level jobs are increasing, women continue to hold almost two-thirds of lower graded jobs (GS 1-8). While women hold more of the Government's Professional and Administrative jobs than ever before, they also continue to hold 86 percent of the nearly 300,000 Clerical jobs. More importantly, women are only one-quarter of the Government's supervisors and only 11 percent of its senior executives.

The relatively small numbers of women in midlevel and upper level jobs in the Government are a concern for a number of reasons. In 1978, the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) set as a standard the recruitment of a representative workforce—an objective which, given the extremely low percentages of women in high-level jobs, the Government almost certainly is not meeting. A perception on the part of a group of citizens that they do not have equal access to jobs which affect the development and implementation of policy can damage the credibility of the Government in the eyes of those citizens. Furthermore, if women are being denied the opportunity for advancement in the Federal Civil Service, the Government is underutilizing the potential skills of a significant portion of its workforce. Of course, all of these concerns also apply to minorities, who appear to be underrepresented in midlevel and upper level jobs, as well. That is the subject of another MSPB report, to be released in 1993.

Determining the reason for the apparent underrepresentation of women in higher graded jobs and their overrepresentation in lower grades and lower graded occupations is a complex task. Should the maldistribution be attributed to illegal discrimination based on sex, or to women not choosing to take the steps required to advance in the Federal Civil Service system? Have women not progressed as far as men because they have fewer years of Government service and less formal education, or are less committed to a career than their male colleagues? Or are there externally imposed barriers that block the advancement of women into supervisory and management levels? These are the questions that this study was designed to answer.

Prior Research

Several studies have examined the issue of whether women have the same opportunities as men for advancement into management positions in the public and private sectors. Some of these studies have indicated that the issue is not one of overt

[1] Howard N. Fullerton, "Labor Force Projections: The Baby Boom Moves On," Monthly Labor Review, November 1991, p. 36.

discrimination, but that women face real, yet very subtle barriers that men do not. Several years ago, the term "glass ceiling" was coined to describe these barriers; women can see their way to the top of the career ladder, but bump into an invisible barricade when they try to make the climb.

Outside the Federal Government. In September of 1988, the Canadian Public Service Commission established the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service to analyze the poor representation of women in the senior ranks of the Canadian civil service. The comprehensive analysis by the task force, completed in 1990, identified policies and practices that were having an adverse impact on women and their opportunities for advancement. The task force also determined that the nature of the barriers a woman encounters and the extent to which these barriers are a factor varies depending on the type of work she does. But, the report concluded, "It is clear, however, that the most significant barriers derive from attitudes."[2] These attitudes include stereotyping of women and "their place" in the public service, skepticism about their abilities, and a tendency on the part of women to underreport their own accomplishments.[3]

In August of 1991, the U.S. Department of Labor released the results of its pilot study of the recruitment and promotion practices of nine Fortune 500 companies. The study indicated that women and minorities are not getting to the top in the corporate world because of informal policies and practices which have the inadvertent effect of excluding them from consideration for top-level jobs. Furthermore, the report said that practices which have the effect of reducing the promotion potential of women and minorities begin early in their careers. For example, women and minorities are more often steered into staff rather than line positions when line positions are those which provide the "fast track" to the top.[4]

The Federal Civil Service. Providing a "Federal work force reflective of the Nation's diversity" became the official policy of the United States with the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act in 1978. The act also called for eliminating the underrepresentation of women and minorities in all occupations and at all grade levels in the Federal Government.[5] The issue of whether these objectives have been reached, and if not, why not, has been the subject of several studies since that time.

Some of the studies have analyzed differences in promotion rates between men and women using data from the Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) maintained by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). One such study concluded that the number of women employed in grades GS 9-12 had remained largely unchanged since passage of the CSRA, but there had been a significant increase in the number of women employed in grades GS/GM 13-15.[6] Another researcher concluded that, for the most part, the scarcity of women in upper level jobs could be attributed to their having less formal education and fewer years of Government service and being concentrated in lower graded occupations than men.[7] Although there was a gap between the grades of men and women with the same amount of formal education, the gap had declined during the 1970's.[8] However, an analysis of the increase in employment of women since

[2] "Beneath the Veneer: The Report of the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service," Canadian Government Publishing Centre, vol. 1, Ottawa, 1990, p. 61.

[3] Ibid., p. 61-73.

[4] U.S. Department of Labor, "A Report on the Glass Ceiling Initiative," Washington, DC, 1991.

[5] 5 U.S.C. 7201.

[6] J. Edward Kellough, "The 1978 Civil Service Reform and Federal Equal Opportunity," American Review of Public Administration, vol. 19, December 1989, pp. 313-324.

[7] See, for example, Gregory Lewis, "Gender and Promotions: Promotion Chances of the White Men and Women in Federal White-Collar Occupations," The Journal of Human Resources, vol. XXI, 1986, pp. 406-419, and Gregory Lewis, "Men and Woman Toward the Top: Backgrounds, Careers, and Potential of Federal Middle Managers," Public Personnel Management (Forthcoming).

[8] Gregory B. Lewis, "Changing Patterns of Sexual Discrimination in Federal Employment," Review of Public Personnel Administration, vol. 7, Spring 1987, pp. 1-13.

1978 in grades GS/GM 13 and above shows that if the rate of increase was unchanged, it would take 45 years for women to be fully represented in those grades.[9]

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) has also examined the effectiveness of affirmative employment policies, in response to requests from Members of Congress. Over the last several years, GAO has issued a number of reports concerning the underrepresentation of women and minorities in specific agencies. More recently, its Governmentwide analysis identified weaknesses in the oversight of Federal agency affirmative action programs performed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Complicating analysis of whether women are fully represented in a particular occupation or specific grade level is the issue of what constitutes "full representation." Is it fair to say that since women are nearly half of the workforce, they should make up half of senior managers? What if there are not sufficient numbers of women qualified to be senior managers?

One of the tasks GAO undertook was to find an adequate benchmark by which to measure representation. The EEOC requires Federal agencies to compare representation of women and minorities in their own workforces to decennial census data regarding where women and minorities are employed in the nationwide civilian workforce. But GAO noted in its testimony to Congress in October 1991 that different ways of measuring representation in the comparable civilian labor force can produce different representation indexes. For example, using 1980 census data based on broad occupational categories shows that white women are severely *underrepresented* as criminal investigators in the Department of Justice, while 1980 census-based, occupation-specific data showed women as *fully represented* as criminal investigators at the same department.[10]

In other words, there is no one way to adequately and uniformly determine whether the representation of women at upper grade levels or in specific occupations is as it should be. Despite these limitations, however, GAO agreed with a statement by the then director of OPM, Constance Newman, who said, "* * * the percentages of women and minorities in the [senior executive service] and the pipeline to the SES are unacceptable."[11]

Focusing on the Barriers

Rather than enter the debate as to what the percentage of women in upper grades should be, we chose to focus on whether there are barriers confronting women who are trying to advance in the Government. Prior research has indicated that these barriers exist and that they can be complex and varied, ranging from differences in qualifications such as education and experience to subtle attitudes, stereotypes and expectations. Our study was designed to examine the range of possible barriers in an effort to identify those which most restrict the advancement of women in the Federal civil service.

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[9] J. Edward Kellough, "The 1978 Civil Service Reform and Federal Equal Opportunity," American Review of Public Administration, vol. 19, No. 4, December 1989, p. 320.

[10] Ungar, Bernard L., "Federal Affirmative Employment: Status of Women and Minority Representation in the Federal Workforce," GAO/T-GGD-92-2, Washington, DC, October 23, 1991.

[11] General Accounting Office, "Federal Workforce: Continuing Need for Federal Affirmative Employment," GAO/GGD-92-27BR, November 1991, p. 3.

METHODOLOGY

All of the reasons why women are not as frequently found in upper management as men may not be immediately obvious. By definition, if a glass ceiling exists, it is invisible and therefore difficult to establish. A look at the occupational and grade distribution of Federal employees suggests that women may be underrepresented in certain occupations and at upper grade levels, but not why this would be so. Is it because women have chosen not to move into those occupations or grade levels, or because their movement is blocked? A look at how the distribution has changed over time shows that more women are at higher grade levels than in the past, but not whether their movement into these levels is occurring as fast as it could or should be. An analysis of promotion rates may tell us whether women are being promoted as often as men, but not when, if ever, women will hold a share of management-level jobs proportionate to their participation in the workforce. Rapid promotion of women, for example, might be offset by an equally rapid turnover rate among women.

Answering the question as to whether women have equal opportunity for advancement in the Federal Government requires an understanding of the factors which account for successful career advancement in Federal agencies. Are women and men affected differently by these factors? What slows down or stops the progress of an upwardly mobile employee? Is the scarcity of women in management in the Government explained by discrimination or by demographic differences, or are there more subtle biases that act to discourage their advancement?

Because of the complexity of issues related to career advancement, we determined that no single source of data would be sufficient for a thorough analysis of whether women face a glass ceiling in Government. Therefore, this study is based on three sources of information:

- Data from OPM's Central Personnel Data File;
- Focus groups of mid- and senior-level Federal employees; and
- A Governmentwide employee survey.

The scope of this analysis is limited to executive branch employees in white-collar occupations.

Central Personnel Data File

The CPDF is a computerized data base with information on approximately 2 million civilian employees. Employees of the U.S. Postal Service and other agencies exempt from personnel reporting requirements, such as the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, are not included in the data base.

We asked OPM to give us two kinds of information from the CPDF:

- The numbers of men and women by grade level and occupational group for various times beginning with FY 1974. These "snapshots" show how men and women are distributed in the workforce, and how the distribution has changed since 1974.

- Promotion rates, turnover rates, and transfer rates by occupational category for men and women, averaged for two 3-year periods—fiscal years 1978-80 and 1988-90. We used these average rates to develop a workforce planning model which projects how the representation of women by grade level will change over the next 25 years if the observed rates of change remain constant.

Focus Groups

In order to obtain a general understanding of the factors which affect the career advancement process in the Federal Government, we arranged for focus groups at seven departments and agencies.[12] Some 144 people participated in 19 focus groups in the summer of 1991. Participants were men and women in grades GS/GM 13-15 and members of the Senior Executive Service. It was not our intention to draw firm conclusions about the career development process Governmentwide from the views expressed by focus group participants. Rather, we were interested in learning about the experiences and perspectives of a variety of individuals in an assortment of occupations and agencies.

In the focus groups we asked participants open-ended questions about their own careers, their perceptions of factors which may affect advancement, and their views as to how the experiences of men and women might differ.

Survey

While focus group participants gave us valuable information about their own experiences and perceptions, we did not know to what extent these experiences and perceptions were common among Federal employees. To broaden our perspective, we developed a written questionnaire (see app. 1) after the focus group discussions were completed. Many of the issues explored in the questionnaire came from the observations made by focus group participants. The questionnaire was administered in the fall of 1991 to a sample of about 13,000 full-time, permanent, white-collar Federal employees in grades GS/GM 9-15 and in the SES. We used a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation by grade range, agency, and sex. Some 8,408 surveys were returned (4,827 from men, 3,443 from women, and 138 from respondents who did not state their gender), for a very satisfactory response rate of 66 percent.

The survey was designed to address questions such as the following:

- What factors predict greater career advancement?
- Are there meaningful differences in the qualifications of men and women at the same grade level?
- Do men and women share the same level of commitment to their jobs and interest in advancement?
- To what extent do employees believe that they are treated unfairly or differently than colleagues of the opposite sex?

We believe that collectively, the quantitative and qualitative data assembled from these three sources provide us with a comprehensive understanding of the career advancement process in the Federal Government, and the nature of barriers, if any, which impede the progress of women.

[12] We would like to acknowledge the assistance of Edith Berkowitz Needleman, doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic and State University, with the focus group portion of this study.

WHERE MEN AND WOMEN ARE IN THE WORKFORCE

As of the end of FY 1990, there were over 1,500,000 people employed in full-time, permanent, white-collar jobs in the executive branch of the Federal Government. Of these employees, about 735,000, or 48 percent, were women. Federal white collar positions are grouped into specific job series within five broad occupational categories, and by grade level. This section discusses the distribution of men and women by occupational category and grade, and how the distribution changed from 1974 to 1990.

Distribution by Occupational Category

The five occupational categories into which Federal occupations are grouped are Professional, Administrative, Technical, Clerical, and Other, otherwise known as PATCO categories. Figure 1 shows the percentage of the workforce in each of these categories for 1974 and 1990. The 1990 data show that over half of Federal employees are designated as Professional or Administrative, about one-fifth of employees are in Clerical occupations, another fifth are in Technical occupations, and less than 3 percent are in Other occupations. Since 1974 there has been an increase in the percentage of employees in Professional and Administrative occupations and a dramatic decline in the percentage of employees in Clerical occupations. The proportion of employees in Technical and Other jobs has remained about the same.

In order to understand the current potential of women to rise in the ranks, we must look at how women are distributed by PATCO category. This is important, because generally only those who are in occupations classified as Professional or Administrative become managers or executives. With few exceptions, unless they can qualify for, and be selected for, a Professional or Administrative job, employees in Technical, Clerical, or Other occupations will not typically advance beyond the GS-12 level.

Figure 1: Distribution of Federal Workforce by PATCO Category, 1974 and 1990

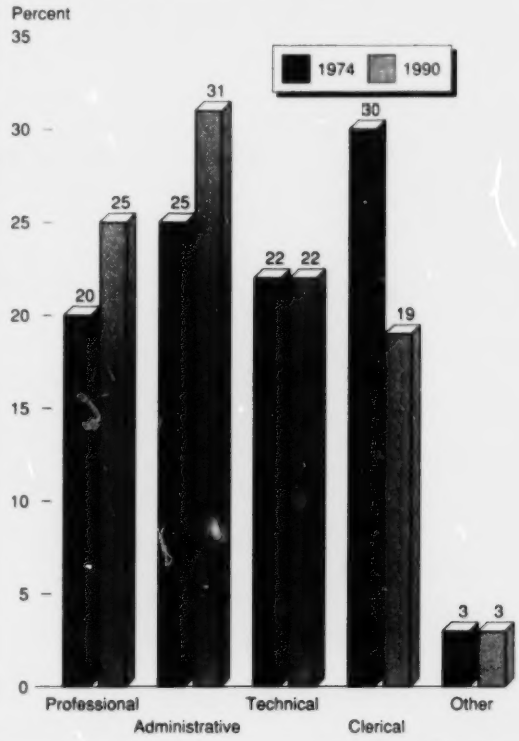
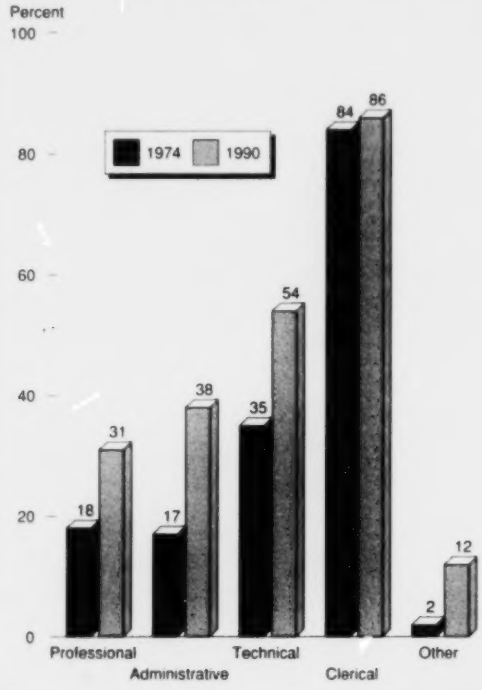


Figure 2 shows the percentage of jobs in each PATCO category held by women in 1974 and 1990. Women have doubled their representation in Professional and Administrative categories, but

Figure 2: Representation of Women Within Each PATCO Category, 1974 and 1990



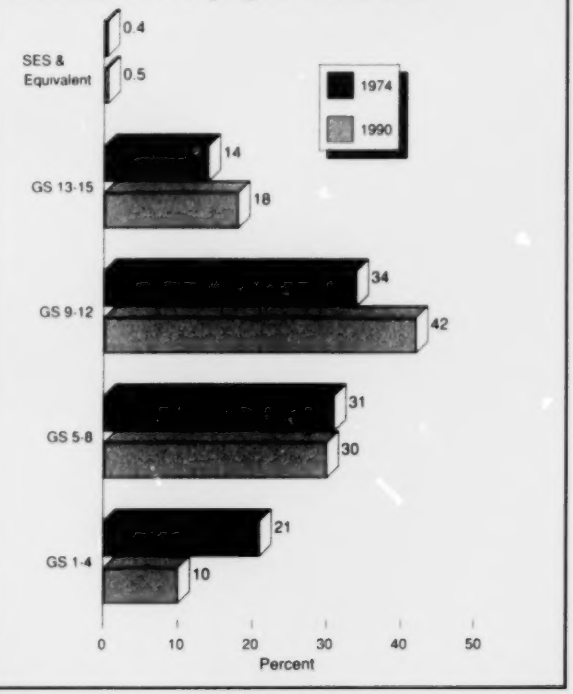
nearly two-thirds of these positions are still held by men. Women's overwhelming domination of Clerical jobs has not changed since 1974. Appendix 2 shows the percentage of jobs by PATCO category held by women for the 22 largest agencies.

Distribution by Grade Level

In 1974, Federal jobs were still classified in the General Schedule into 18 grade levels. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 created the SES, covering most of the managerial and policymaking positions which had previously been held by employees in grades GS 16-18. Figure 3 shows how Federal employees were distributed by grade-level grouping in 1974 and 1990. There has been an increase in the percentage of employees in higher level jobs and a decrease in the percentage of employees in lower level jobs. In 1974, one-fifth of the workforce was in grades GS 1-4; in 1990 the share was only one-tenth. The percentage of employees in grades GS 13-15[13] increased from 14 percent in 1974 to 18 percent in 1990, but the percentage of employees in the Senior Executive Service and equivalent jobs has remained at no more than .5 percent.

Although women continue to dominate lower graded jobs, there has also been a marked increase in the percentage of mid- and upper-level jobs held by women. Figure 4 shows the percentage of jobs in each grade level group held by women in 1974 and 1990. Women continue to hold three-quarters of GS 1-4 jobs. The percentage of women in grades 9-12 doubled, going from 19 to 38 percent while the percentage of women in grades GS 13-15 has more than tripled, going from 5 percent to 18 percent. The percentage of women in the SES has risen even more, going from 2 percent to 11 percent. But men still hold the majority of jobs graded

Figure 3: Distribution of Federal Workforce by Grade Level Grouping, 1974 and 1990



[13] References in this section to jobs in grades GS 13-15 include those classified as GM 13-15, a subset of GS 13-15 jobs created by the CSRA in 1978.

GS 9 and above. The average grade for women in white-collar jobs (7.3) remains 3 points below the average grade for men in white-collar jobs (10.3). Appendix 3 shows the percentage of jobs in each grade group held by women for the 22 largest Federal agencies.

Although the occupational and grade-level distribution of women has changed since 1974, women on the whole continue to face a dual bind with regard to their potential for rapid advancement. They occupy a minority of Professional and Administrative occupations and, where they are in those occupations, they are frequently found in the lower graded jobs. Figure 5 shows the portion of each grade group held by women for Professional and Administrative occupations, combined.

The fact that women represent over half of those in the entry-level jobs (GS 5-7) in Professional and Administrative occupations means that lack of *recruitment* of women for these occupations is probably no longer a barrier to their advancement into upper level jobs. The important issue to address now, then, is whether once in these occupations, women are moving at the rate they should be through the pipeline, or whether their progress is hindered.

Figure 5: Representation of Women Within Each Grade Level Grouping, Professional and Administrative Jobs

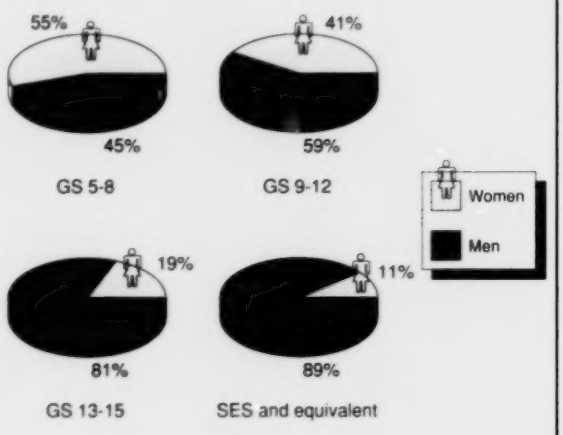
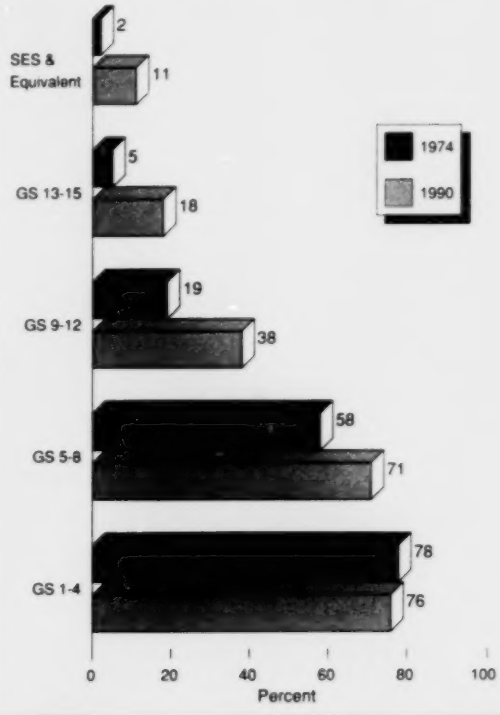


Figure 4: Representation of Women Within Each Grade Level Grouping, 1974 and 1990



Projections for the Future

Women have made progress during the 1970's and 1980's, and are expected to continue to make progress, in moving into Professional and Administrative occupations and higher graded jobs. Given the movement during this timeframe, we were interested in knowing how much the distribution of women by occupational group and grade level would change in the next two decades, if current trends continue. Will any change in the relative distribution of women be rapid enough, given current trends, to make concern about underrepresentation unwarranted? Or is the movement of women within the Civil Service occurring so slowly, that left unheeded, there will be little change within the next 25 years?

Twenty-five years from now, if current trends continue, women will still hold less than one-third of senior executive jobs.

This kind of analysis requires examining whether promotion rates for women equal those of men, and also the effect of hiring, separation, retirement, and transfer rates among occupational categories in the Government. We asked OPM to give us CPDF data which averaged these rates, for each PATCO category, over two 3-year periods, fiscal years 1978-80 and 1988-90. Averaging over a 3-year period dilutes the effect of any aberration in the pattern of these rates that may occur in any one year. Comparison of the two 3-year periods allows us to determine if the rates have changed.

In comparing data obtained for the two 3-year periods, we found—as we expected—that women are now entering Professional and Administrative occupations, both through transfers from Technical and Clerical occupations, and from the outside, at a much greater rate than they were during 1978-80. The average rate of employees leaving Government service is also considerably higher (by 30 to 50 percent) than it was then. As a result, the rates of new hire and promotion have grown as well. In other words, the opportunity for women to move into and up through the pipeline is significantly greater now than it was in 1978-80.

To estimate the effect that current patterns of advancement will have on the distribution of women by grade level in the Federal workforce of the future, we developed a mathematical forecasting model. Since a variety of factors can affect the distribution of women and men by grade, the model included estimates of the rates at which men and women will enter Government service, retire or resign from Government service, transfer among occupational (PATCO) categories, and rates at which they will be promoted from one grade to the next. In order to take into account occupational differences, separate projections were made for men and women for each grade level in each PATCO category, and then the rates were combined. In all cases the model used estimates that were based upon the actual rates at which men and women entered, retired from, and separated from the Government. It also considered the rates at which employees transfered among occupational groups, and were promoted from each grade level, within each PATCO category, for 1988-90.

Using this mathematical forecasting model, projections were made to show the rate at which the composition of the Federal workforce can be expected to change over the next 25 years. The model assumes that these rates will remain constant over the next 25 years. It does not try to account for the effects of any major changes in the overall size or composition of the Federal workforce, as such an exercise would necessarily be based only on speculation.

The projections also may be somewhat optimistic. For example, the number of higher graded Government jobs increased during 1988-90, as it did from 1974-90. If this growth does not continue, there may be less opportunity for the advancement of women. The model assumes that the rate of increase from 1988-90 will continue, which it may not. Nevertheless, we believe the model, though imperfect, serves a useful purpose in giving us some understanding of how the grade level distribution of women relative to men will change over the next 25 years, if current trends continue.[14]

Table 1 shows the results of the application of the model to white-collar, executive branch jobs. It shows that by the year 2017, women will comprise over half of the workforce, but will continue to hold considerably less than half of the jobs in grades above GS 12. Twenty-five years from now, if current trends continue, women will still hold less than one-third of senior executive jobs, and only slightly more than one-third of GS/GM 13-15 jobs.

[14] In January 1991, senior executives received a long anticipated pay raise which will substantially increase pensions for those who retire after January 1, 1994. As a result, most Federal agencies are anticipating more retirements than usual in 1994. This was taken into account in the model.

Table 1: Percentage of each grade held by women, 1990 and projected 1992-2017

Year	GS-1	GS-2	GS-3	GS-4	GS-5	GS-6	GS-7	GS-8	GS-9	GS-10	GS-11	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	TOTAL
1990	59	62	71	78	76	78	64	60	47	29	40	29	21	16	13	11	48
1992	77	77	67	76	76	79	65	59	50	26	42	31	24	18	14	12	48
1997	76	77	69	75	71	77	67	63	53	35	45	34	28	24	19	16	48
2002	76	77	69	75	69	75	67	65	56	44	47	37	32	28	24	20	49
2007	76	77	69	75	68	73	65	64	57	50	48	38	34	31	28	24	49
2012	76	77	69	75	68	73	64	61	57	53	49	40	36	33	31	27	50
2017	76	77	69	75	68	73	63	59	56	53	49	40	37	35	34	30	50

This is a vast improvement over the 11 percent of senior executive jobs they held in 1990 and the 2 percent they held in 1974. Nevertheless, by this measure, in 25 years, women will still be underrepresented at top management levels. As noted in the introduction to this report, comparing the percentage of women in top-level positions to the percentage of women in the Federal workforce overall can be misleading, since women are more often found in jobs which are not in the pipeline to management. The majority of women in Government (currently 58 percent) are in Technical and Clerical occupations. As long as this is the case, the percentage of women at the management level will probably never match the percentage of women in the Federal workforce as a whole.

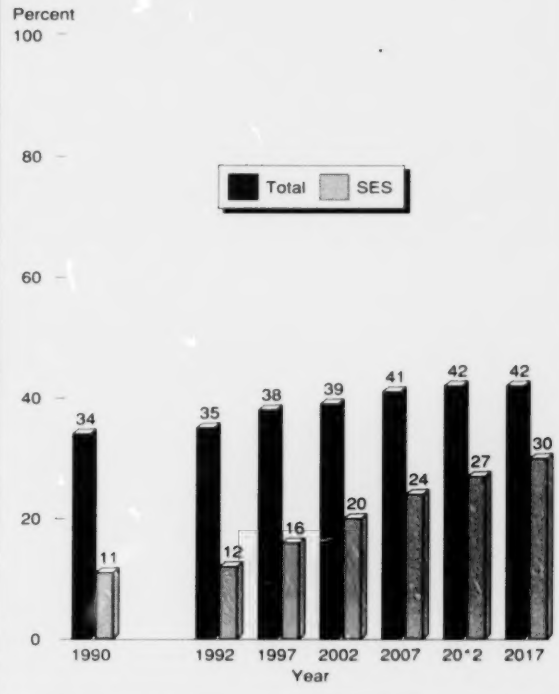
To account for the effects of occupational differences, we also projected the percentage of women at each grade level in Professional and Administrative occupations. (See table 2.) These occupations, in general, *are* in the pipeline to management levels. The result showed that over half of those in the lower grades of these occupations will be women, just as is true now.

Given current entry rates from outside Government, and transfer rates into Professional and Administrative positions from other occupations, the overall percentage of women in these positions will grow from about 34 percent in 1990 to 42 percent by the year 2017. But, as table 1 showed, the percentage of women in the senior executive

Table 2: Percentage of each grade held by women in Professional and Administrative jobs, 1990 and Projected 1992-2017

Year	GS-5	GS-7	GS-9	GS-11	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	TOTAL
1990	55	55	54	44	31	22	16	13	11	34
1992	54	53	55	46	33	24	18	14	12	35
1997	54	54	55	48	36	29	24	19	16	38
2002	54	54	55	49	39	32	28	24	20	39
2007	54	54	56	49	40	34	32	28	24	41
2012	54	54	56	49	40	36	34	31	27	42
2017	54	54	56	49	41	36	35	34	30	42

Figure 6: Actual and Projected Percentage of Professional and Administrative Jobs and SES Jobs Held by Women, 1990 and Projected 1992-2017



service will be about 30 percent, still below the projected percentage of women in Professional and Administrative jobs. (See figure 6)

An examination of promotion rates reveals why correcting the imbalance of men and women in management is such a long process. One reason is that women in Professional occupations are promoted much less often from grades GS 9 and GS 11 than men, based on data for 1988-90. While an average of 44 percent of men in GS 9 jobs are promoted each year, only 33 percent of women in GS 9 jobs are. Similarly, 21 percent of men in GS 11 jobs are promoted each year, versus only 15 percent of women. Thus, men are promoted at a rate nearly 33 percent greater than women at the GS 9 level, and 44 percent greater than women at the GS 11 level. Men had the same advantage at these two grade levels during the other period examined, 1978-80.

The difference in promotion rates at grades GS 9 and GS 11 is especially important for several reasons. First, these two grade levels account for a significant part (one-third) of the Professional workforce. Second, the difference in promotion rates at these grade levels has a dramatic effect on the distribution of women at higher grades in that these grade levels represent a gateway to higher graded jobs. Fifty-eight percent of new hires enter Professional occupations at or below the GS 9 level, and 75 percent of new hires enter at or below GS 11, and all of these new hires, except those entering at GS 11 must be promoted to the GS 9 and/or GS 11 levels before they can be promoted into supervisory and management jobs. Furthermore, even though promotion rates for women from grades *above* GS 11 in Professional occupations are approximately the same as for men, the number of women eligible for promotion to higher grades has already been reduced by the time they reach grade GS 12.

Another reason for the slow progression of women is that promotion rates for both men and women are much lower in higher graded jobs than in lower graded ones. For example, on average, only about 1 in 8 GS 12 employees of either sex is promoted each year, and 1 in 100 GS 15 employees. As a result, it typically takes many years for an employee, whether male or female, to progress from the GS 12 level to more senior positions.

The model, then, shows the same pattern as the data from 1974 and 1990 presented in tables 1 and 2. Women will continue to move into Professional and Administrative occupations and into higher graded jobs. But progress is slow, and, if current trends continue, women will continue to be underrepresented in upper level jobs in 2017.

Men are promoted at a rate nearly 33 percent greater than women at the GS 9 level, and 44 percent greater than women at the GS 11 level.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

What determines who gets ahead and who doesn't in the Government? A number of factors may affect employees' potential for advancement, including their tenure in the Federal workforce, amount of formal education, commitment to the job, and desire for advancement. In addition, studies of private sector promotion processes, such as the one done by the Department of Labor (see footnote 4), have found that an individual's prospect for advancement can be affected by a host of organizational factors such as access to developmental opportunities, significant work assignments, mentors, and networks. Judging from evidence from studies outside the Federal Government, women may often face barriers ranging from overt discrimination to more subtle attitudes and stereotyping that slow their rate of advancement.

The focus group and written questionnaire portions of this study looked at the career advancement process in the Federal Government. The statistics reported in this section are based on a representative sample of 8,400 survey responses from executive branch employees, primarily in Professional and Administrative occupations, in grades GS/GM 9-15, and in the SES. To clarify and illustrate some of the patterns found in the survey data, we also referred to the transcripts of our focus group discussions.

We have already discussed how the distribution of women in Government is skewed toward the lower end of the grade structure. We would expect, then, that the women in our survey population would, on average, be lower graded than men. In fact, the average grade of women in that population is 11.25, which is significantly lower than the 12.05 average grade of the men we surveyed. Another way to look at advancement is to count the number of promotions beyond GS 7 received by survey respondents who entered Government at the same grade. Out of the maximum possible number of promotions of seven that a survey respondent could have received using this formula, the men have received an average of 3.92 promotions during their Federal career, while the women have received an average of only 3.15 promotions; again a significant difference.

What experiences are shared by those who have attained the highest grades, or the greatest number of promotions? Do differences between the experiences of men as a group and women as a group explain why women are less often found in high grades in the Government?

Experience and Education

An analysis of survey data shows that experience and education are two of the most important factors in career advancement in the Federal Government. Those at the highest grade levels, or with the greatest number of promotions during their Federal careers, tend to be those with the greatest length of Federal service, and those with the most formal education.

For most employees, it takes a long time to move up the career ladder. Three-quarters of survey respondents currently in GS 13 positions have been in the Government at least 12 years. Similarly, about the same proportion of senior executives started their Federal careers 20 or more years ago. To the extent that advancement depends on experience, women in the Government are at a

disadvantage. According to CPDF data, the average length of Government service for men is 15.1 years and for women, 13.7 years, in Professional and Administrative jobs.

We also found a positive relationship between high grade levels and education. This is not to say that completing levels of education is always a necessary or sufficient condition for advancement. There are senior executives who don't have college degrees, just as there are employees in lower graded jobs who have advanced degrees. Nevertheless, on average, Governmentwide, there is a tendency for those in top-level jobs to have more formal education than those in lower level jobs. Table 3 shows the average grade by highest degree earned, for survey respondents; i.e., those who have reached at least the GS 9 level, and are primarily in Professional and Administrative occupations.

Table 3: Average grade of survey respondents, by highest degree earned

Degree	Average Grade
High School Diploma or Associate of Arts	11.08
Bachelor's Degree	11.94
Master's Degree	12.45
Doctorate	13.40
Professional (e.g., M.D., J.D.)	13.62

Survey data indicate that amount of formal education has been more important for advancement for those employees with a longer length of Government service than those with less service. This is probably because the workforce is attaining higher levels of education, so education has become less of a distinguishing factor among applicants for promotions.

While men and women who have worked for the Government for 10 or fewer years have about the same amount of education, this is not true for those with more service. (See table 4.) Only about half of the women with 10 to 20 years of Government service, and only one-quarter of the women with more than 20 years of service have a bachelor's degree.

Thus, another reason fewer women are seen at top levels in Government is because overall, they have less formal education. Not only are there fewer women in the pool of those with the greatest amount of Government experience, but those women who are in that pool have less formal education than men.

But education and experience only account for a portion of the difference between the average grade of men and women. Table 5 shows the average grades of men and women with the same amount of experience, accounting for differences in education.[15]

While these differences in average grade may not seem large, they demonstrate that women have not been treated equitably with regard to promotions during their Federal careers. If women had been

Table 4: Percent of survey respondents with at least a 4-year degree, by length of Government service, and sex

Length of Service	Women	Men
Under 5 years	89	84
5-10 years	74	74
10-20 years	48	71
More than 20 years	23	68

[15] It is possible to use statistical techniques to calculate the degree to which one variable; e.g., amount of education, affects a second variable; e.g., the average grade of men and women in the Federal Workforce. It is then possible to remove the effect of the first variable (education) to determine whether men and women would still differ in terms of their average grade. For example, in this report, the term "accounting for education" means that we removed the effect that education has on the difference between men's and women's average grade or number of promotions when we calculated the averages. Once the effect of education has been "accounted for," any remaining difference in average grades or number of promotions must be explained by factors other than education.

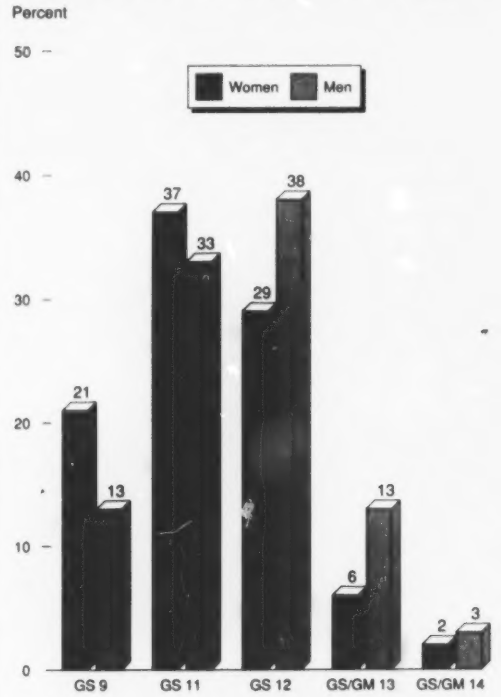
treated equitably, there should be no significant difference in the average grades shown in table 5. Over the course of their careers, women currently employed in the Government have received fewer promotions than men with the same length of Government service and the same amount of formal education.

Figure 7 illustrates this point in another way. It shows the distribution of survey participants, by sex, who entered Government at entry-level grades GS 5 or GS 7 with comparable levels of formal education, and who had no more than ten years of Government service at the time of the survey.

Overall, the concentration of women is greater at the lower grade levels, and the concentration of men is higher at the upper grade levels. Twice as many men as women have progressed to the GS 13 level. Twenty-one percent of women are in GS 9 jobs, while only 13 percent of men have not yet been promoted beyond that level.

Based upon differences in the number of promotions, it is clear that differences in educational attainment and length of service do not account for all of the difference in the distribution of men and women in the Government. We need to look further to explain more of the reason so few women are at the top.

Figure 7: Differences in Grade Distribution of Comparable Survey Respondents, by Sex*



* Chart includes only survey respondents with 10 or fewer years of Government service and at least a 4-year degree, and who entered Government at the GS 5 or GS 7 level.

Table 5: Average grade of survey respondents, by length of Government service, and sex, accounting for educational differences

Length of Service	Women	Men
Under 5 years	10.80	11.34
5-10 years	11.23	11.61
10-20 years	11.58	11.85
More than 20 years	11.71	12.50

Mobility

People in high grades or with more promotions also tend to have relocated geographically more often than those in lower grades or with fewer promotions. This is not surprising, as many agencies have informal or formal requirements for promotion that include experience in both the field and at headquarters. A number of survey respondents commented that they saw requirements for mobility to be a major barrier for themselves or many others who are seeking to advance. The following comment is illustrative:

It is clear that differences in educational attainment and length of service do not account for all of the difference in the distribution of men and women in the Government.

> While I plan to pursue promotional opportunities in the future, I believe my limited or lack of mobility will have a significant negative impact on my success.

Table 6 shows the average number of relocations made by men and women for the sake of their own careers by grade range. The number of relocations increases as grade level increases. But at any level, women have clearly relocated less often than men.

Table 6: Average number of relocations by survey respondents, by grade range and sex

Grade Range	Women	Men
GS 9-12	.60	1.01
GS 13-15	.65	1.26
SES	.97	1.58

Overall, survey responses indicate that men are somewhat more likely to be willing to relocate than women. Fifty-eight percent of men and 48 percent of women said they would be willing, at least to some extent, to relocate in order to advance their careers. There are a variety of reasons why fewer women than men are willing to relocate, including that some women have subordinated their own careers to their husbands' careers.

But comments made during the focus groups indicate that in many cases, women are not less career oriented but rather have not been *asked* to relocate, or encouraged to pursue careers that may require relocation, because it was *assumed* that their careers were subordinate to their husbands'. For example, one focus group participant said:

> Relocations have always been a problem in many agencies, the concept of career advancement being associated with taking different geographical locations. And I think it's very widespread in most agencies. And there's been an assumption that wives will follow husbands but husbands will not follow wives, and I don't know if it's changing.

The possibility that women are less often asked to relocate is to some degree substantiated by the fact that there was no practical difference in the percentage of women (4 percent) and the percentage of men (7 percent) who reported that they had refused to relocate during their Federal career.

There is also some evidence that those who are unable or unwilling to relocate may be *perceived* as having less commitment to their careers and less desire for advancement. As we will discuss in more depth in the next section, the degree of commitment to the job that an employee is perceived to have can have a significant impact on her or his prospects for advancement. The following comment by a survey respondent gives a clue as to the relationship between mobility and ambition:

> Mobility plays too great a role in advancement. Top performing women who cannot move are hindered in the promotion process. They must go to great lengths to explain lack of mobility so that when a job is open locally they will not be passed over for failure to have applied for jobs outside their locale. Non-mobile women have high ambitions, too!

We don't know the extent to which women have hindered their own career advancement by an unwillingness to relocate, nor the extent to which their career advancement has been limited by an *expectation* that they will not relocate. We do know that, on average, those with fewer geographic relocations have not progressed as far in their careers.

A question which must be addressed, if we are to bring more women into higher ranks, is whether mobility should be as important a criteria for

advancement as it is. For some high level jobs, experience in more than one location is undoubtedly essential. Where it is, women must decide whether resisting relocation is more important than meeting prerequisites for one of those jobs.

But there are also many organizations where mobility has become a pro forma requirement for advancement without a demonstrated link between such a requirement and job performance. In these situations the best candidate for the job may be bypassed simply because his or her background does not include one or more relocations. Given the reality that a greater proportion of women than men are not mobile, pro forma relocation requirements will have a disproportionately adverse impact on the advancement of women.

Regardless, even if we remove the effect of relocations on their careers, women still have a lower average grade and have received, on average, fewer promotions than men. Table 7 shows the average number of promotions received by men and women who entered Government at the same grade, by length of service, and accounting for education and the number of relocations. The differences between men and women are significant.

Job Commitment

It is also reasonable to assume that organizations more often promote those who demonstrate a strong level of commitment to their job and interest

Given the reality that a greater proportion of women than men are not mobile, pro forma relocation requirements will have a disproportionately adverse impact on the advancement of women.

in advancement. Are women promoted less often because they are less committed to their jobs or less ambitious or merely because they are perceived to be this way?

With regard to the first question, evidence from the survey indicates that women certainly believe themselves to be as ambitious and committed to their jobs as men. Table 8 shows the percentages of men and women responding to three statements included on the survey which asked them to indicate the extent to which they believed each of the statements applied to themselves.

Clearly, these results indicate that women and men are equally likely to express a strong commitment to their jobs.

We also asked survey participants about their career-related plans. A slightly higher percentage of women (64 percent) than men (57 percent) said they were planning to apply for promotion within or outside of the agency within the next 3 to 5 years. Based upon these responses, women appear to be as ambitious as men.

Table 7: Average number of promotions received by survey respondents entering at comparable grades, by length of service and sex, accounting for education and number of relocations

	Average number of promotions		Difference between men and women
Length of Service	Women	Men	
Under 5 years	2.33	2.77	.44
5-10 years	3.00	3.40	.40
10-20 years	3.49	3.68	.19
More than 20 years	3.72	4.33	.61

Table 8: Percent of survey respondents responding that statements about job commitment apply to them "to some extent" or "to a great extent," by sex

Statement	Women	Men
I am very committed to my job.	95	93
I am always enthusiastic about my job.	89	88
I am willing to devote whatever time is necessary to my job in order to advance my career.	78	74

Another indication that women are just as earnest about their jobs as men comes from performance appraisal data. Annual performance appraisals are designed to evaluate the quality of employees' performance, which is certainly related to the seriousness with which they approach their jobs. Although not by any means a perfect evaluation of the work of Federal employees, these ratings at least provide an indication of how employees are doing relative to each other.

According to CPDF data, there was no practical difference in the average performance rating for women and men in Professional and Administrative jobs as of December 1991. The average rating for women was 4.03 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest ("outstanding") rating, and for men was 3.99. A profile of Federal employees using FY 1990 data from OPM reported that women in the white-collar workforce in general received 40 percent more "outstanding" ratings than men, and female managers receive one-third more top ratings than male managers.[16] Clearly, these data support the notion that women are as serious and as capable as their male peers and they are performing their jobs just as well, if not better, than men.

But even employees who say they are committed to their jobs and careers, and who receive high performance appraisals, may not be *seen* as committed to their jobs by the managers and supervisors who make decisions which affect their careers. A Wall Street Journal article noted recently, for example:

> No matter how individual women approach their jobs, research shows women as a group are still widely seen as lacking in career commitment.[17]

Promotion rate data shown previously in table 7 provide one indication that promotion rates may be affected by perceived job commitment rather than actual commitment. The difference in average number of promotions received is greatest between men and women with more than 20 years of Government service. This is not surprising, as there is widespread agreement that women faced more overt discrimination in the workplace prior to the 1970's than they have more recently.

What is most interesting, however, is that the difference between average number of promotions received by men and women is *less* for those with between 10 and 20 years of experience than it is for those with 10 or fewer years of experience. This could be a function of a resurgence of discrimination against women during the 1980's. Another, more likely, explanation is that women who have proven their commitment to the job by remaining in the workforce for at least 10 years do better relative to men than women who have been in the workforce 10 or fewer years and have not had the

[16] "Profile 1992," special supplement in the Federal Times, June 15, 1992, p. P12.
[17] Sue Shellenberger, "Flexible Policies May Slow Women's Careers," Wall Street Journal, Apr. 22, 1992.

time to demonstrate their commitment. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to be presumed to have a commitment.

Expectations of Work and Family Requirements

Time Spent on the Job. Our analysis of factors related to career success in the Government showed that the number of promotions received by employees is very much related to the average amount of time spent on the job each week. The importance of how much time an employee spends at work is reinforced by comments made during the focus groups, such as the following:

> I think there's an ethic in this department [that] if you're in the SES, you really better be available from 7:00 to 7:00.

and:

> I'm not going to have a [manager] at the [GS] 15 level or an SES [manager] * * * who can only work 7:00 to 3:30 and when 3:30 rolls around they're out of here. If you want to start work at 7:00 a.m., God bless you, but if I need you at 6:00 p.m. you should be here.

As shown previously in table 8, women are not, overall, less *willing* to devote the time necessary to advance their career. But the childcare responsibilities which are traditionally handled by women apparently do have the effect of limiting their careers. Survey responses show that women *without children*, on average, devote the same amount of time to their jobs each week as men without children. But women *with young children* (elementary or preschool age) devote less time to their jobs, on average, than men with or without children.

This is not meant to imply that women with children work less than 40 hours per week, as only 2 percent of them do. Forty-three percent of women with children reported that they work 40 hours per week, 37 percent work 41-45 hours per week and the remaining 18 percent work more than 45 hours per week. Unfortunately, the limits faced by women with children in their ability to devote the same amount of time as men to their jobs, above and beyond the standard 40 hour work week, may also result in the *perception* that they are less committed to their jobs than men, and unable to do their jobs as well.

The Impact of Family Responsibilities. The Wall Street Journal article mentioned in the previous section went on to quote the Families and Work Institute as saying that in companies where fast-trackers are pushed to work long hours,

> work and family programs may allow women to work fewer hours, perhaps inadvertently creating a "mommy track" where women are seen as less committed and less worthy of promotion.

Women, who usually bear more responsibility for child rearing than men do, are in a bind. While they may be very committed to their jobs and want to advance, they may in fact be seen as less than fully committed because, owing to childcare responsibilities, they do not have the flexibility to work extra hours. Women who take maternity leave are often perceived in the same way.

This point is illustrated by a senior executive focus group participant who described a subordinate who had requested extended maternity leave. He said:

> She's clearly made a priority decision, there's nothing irrational about the decision , but * * * it's much less likely she'll get a managerial shot or critical-deadline-driven assignment shot. That's much less likely.

When pressed on the issue by another participant, he explained that his boss won't "trust her to take serious, intense projects, time driven, and finish them."

Even where having a family does not limit the number of hours a woman is available to work, women in focus groups reported that there often is a perception on the part of supervisors that they will be limited by family. For example, several

This suggests that women who have spent relatively little time in the workforce are less likely to be viewed as committed to their jobs, whether or not they have children.

women in focus groups noted that assumptions are made that women won't be able to complete certain assignments because they have children. Senior executive women described situations where women, after having children were told, "Well now you won't want to travel and you won't want this assignment. " Others talked about how women with children were told that particular jobs were not the "right job for them" because they required late hours. The following comment by another participant is illustrative:

> There is this business that as a successful senior executive you come in at 7:00 and you stay longer and work harder than anybody else and you really don't start your rumination about really important things until 10:00 or so at night. And the effect of this was that the only people who [they] wanted to discuss the job [vacancy with] were men of any age, single women, and older women with no kids. I mean there were two or three names in the hat and they said, "I don't want to talk to her because she has children who are still home in these hours." Now they don't pose that thing about men on the list, many of whom also have children in that age group.

Another executive noted:

> I have one example of a very competent woman who I'm sure if she had not had a family would now be promoted several grade levels into a different organization.

Although childcare responsibilities may affect the amount of time that a woman can devote to her job and thus also affect her perceived job commitment, there is also evidence suggesting that women without children may *also* be seen as less than fully committed to their jobs because they may one day decide to have children. The evidence comes from an examination of advancement rates for survey participants with and without children at various stages during their careers.

During the first five years of their careers, women with and without children advance at approximately the same rate, while both groups of women have received significantly fewer promotions than men with and without children during the same 5 years. The difference in number of promotions between women without children and men without children declines as women remain for longer periods of time in the Federal workforce. This suggests that women who have spent relatively little time in the workforce are less likely to be viewed as committed to their jobs, whether or not they have children.

This is not meant to imply that Federal managers consciously discriminate against women with children, or women who are at an early stage in their careers. It may be that to the extent that working overtime or on the weekends serves as a proxy for job commitment, women with children (or with the potential to have children) are seen as less committed since childcare limits their flexibility to work extra hours.

The intangibility of this factor is demonstrated by the range of responses we received in asking survey participants to agree or disagree with the following statement: "In general, in my organization it is a disadvantage to have family responsibilities when being considered for a job." One-third of women (33 percent) and one-quarter of men (23 percent) agreed with the statement; 28 percent of women and 39 percent of men disagreed; and the remaining 38 percent of men and women neither agreed nor disagreed.

Family responsibilities can also affect men, particularly now that more men are taking more responsibility for childcare. But our survey data show that more women than men continue to have primary responsibility for children. Of survey respondents who have dependents now, more than twice as many women (56 percent) as men (24 percent) reported that they have primary responsibility for the care of those dependents.

As shown in table 9, it is clear that women with children pay a greater price in terms of career advancement than do men. Overall, women with children have received fewer promotions than women without children and than men regardless of whether they had children. In calculating these averages, we also controlled for length of Government service, amount of education, the number of relocations, and any extended leaves of absence that were taken.

Similarly, while 86 percent of men who succeeded in reaching the SES had children living with them during their Federal careers, only 54 percent of women senior executives did.

Table 9: Average number of promotions for survey respondents with and without children, by sex, accounting for length of Government service, education, the number of relocations, and leaves of absence

	With Children	Without Children
Women	3.37	3.51
Men	3.88	3.57

One other obvious point raised by table 9 is that men with children have been promoted more often, on average, than men without children. We can only speculate on the reasons for this. One possibility is that men with families have a greater motivation to advance. Another reason may be related to an old issue raised anew by a focus group participant:

> Where people's bonuses, grades, salaries were being discussed, it was literally mentioned by the other men that "look, he's a male, and he has a family to support—if anybody should get a promotion it should be him."

Since this issue was raised a number of times during the focus groups, we decided to use the survey to see how widespread this perception is. We asked those surveyed to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement: "In general, I think that managers in my organization believe men are the primary income providers, and so are more deserving of promotions than women." While a majority of men and women did not find much merit in this statement, a sizable minority of women (33 percent) believed it to be true at least to some extent.

Time Spent at Work as a Criterion for Promotion. Based upon our survey and focus group results, it is apparent that women, and especially women with children are sometimes seen as being less committed to their jobs. This perception may be a significant barrier to advancement for women. The issue is not whether choosing to give one's family equal or more importance than the job is a wise or appropriate decision for a Federal employee to make. The issue is whether a parent's real or perceived lack of flexibility because of family should affect, to the degree it does, the evaluation of her or his commitment to the job and potential for advancement.

Few would disagree that an incorrect perception about an employee should not be the basis for a decision affecting his or her career advancement. But are managers too quick to assume that employees who can't work longer hours are inferior candidates for promotion or career-enhancing assignments? Should not the quantity and quality of an employee's work be the primary determining factor?

Like the issue of mobility, the time that an employee has available to devote to the job is often considered as a key component in evaluating his or her suitability for advancement.

Like the issue of mobility, the time that an employee has available to devote to the job is often considered as a key component in evaluating his or her suitability for advancement. Many jobs undoubtedly do require a substantial commitment of time beyond the standard 40-hour work week. As long as women are more likely to have primary responsibility for childcare, these women may find themselves unable to be competitive for these jobs because they do not have the flexibility to make that time commitment. However, managers should ensure that time availability is only considered as a criterion where it is indeed necessary for successful performance of a particular job or work assignment so that those who may be among the best candidates, including women with children or the potential to have children, are not overlooked.

We have already noted that women, on average, receive the same performance ratings as men and a higher percentage of the "outstanding" ratings, and women managers receive more of the top ratings than male managers. This is evidence that women's work is of equal or even higher quality than men's, and further suggests that there may be better criteria for judging an employee's potential for advancement than her or his ability to work long hours.

For example, some of the women who participated in our focus groups talked about the fact that competing demands on their time during the period they were raising children actually helped them to be as or more productive than they would have been otherwise. A comment by a woman reflecting on her own career illustrates this point:

> I tended to work much harder during the working day and my attention was more focused on what I was doing than some of my male colleagues' was. This was in part because they would stay later than I did, or they tended to have much more in the way of informal interactions that I didn't have the time to do in anything other than a focused way.

Some private-sector companies are also beginning to question whether the number of hours per week spent on the job should play such an important role in an employee's potential for advancement. For example, according to the director of benefits for Xerox, that corporation urges managers to stress results rather than time spent in the office, relocations, and other "corporate rituals" in determining who is the best candidate for a job.[18]

In a 1991 report, MSPB called for greater expansion of programs which help employees to balance work and family responsibilities, including expanding part-time job opportunities and using workplace flexibilities. The report also noted that:

> [T]raditional business values (including the Government's) taught employees that their careers would be hurt if 'personal' issues interfered with their job * * * [M]anagement must go beyond ensuring that work environments are not hostile to work and family concerns, but rather must create environments which are proactively supportive. Otherwise, work and family benefit programs will not achieve their desired results—losing the potential benefits to both employees and the Government.[19]

If the Government wants to go beyond helping employees to meet their needs and providing a better quality and productive workforce, to ensuring that representation by women at top levels increases, then even more should be asked of managers. Agency heads should ask their managers not just to support work and family programs, but to reexamine the criteria on which they and supervisors give employees career-enhancing work assignments and promotions. Managers should ensure that responsibility for children, or the possibility that a woman will have children in the future, does not play an inordinate role in their decisions.

[18] "Averting Career Damage From Family Policies," Wall Street Journal, June 24, 1992.
[19] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, "Balancing Work Responsibilities and Family Needs: The Federal Civil Service Response," November 1991, p. 81.

Employees' Views of Their Career Advancement

We were also interested in knowing what Federal employees themselves believe has helped their career advancement. Table 10 shows some of the items which men and women were asked to rate in terms of the effect of each on their Federal careers.

Survey respondents are very aware of the importance of work experience and education in their career advancement. Over 80 percent of both men and women reported that their previous work experience helped them in their careers. But men are more likely than women to say that formal educational qualifications helped them.

Table 10: Responses of survey respondents about the effect of various items on their career advancement, by sex

	Percent responding:					
	Helped a lot		Helped a little		No effect	
Item	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Formal educational qualifications	44	50	30	31	15	15
Previous work experience	60	58	24	26	13	15
My performance or "track" record	79	67	16	23	3	9
Opportunity to act in a position(s) prior to appointment	44	30	27	29	27	38
Completion of specialized or technical training	44	38	35	35	20	27
Completion of formal developmental program or managerial training	26	15	31	34	42	50
Developmental assignments	42	26	37	39	20	33
Having a senior person/mentor looking out for my interests	28	12	37	32	31	52
Social/informal contacts with managers in the organization	8	6	32	27	53	61
Social/informal contacts with personnel office staff	4	2	19	12	72	83
Contacts through professional association or other formal network	8	5	24	19	67	74
Recommendations of friends or acquaintances who knew the selecting official	17	10	30	24	51	65
Having friends or acquaintances on the staff of the organization(s) where I applied	11	7	30	22	58	70

In the Federal Government, women actually derive more benefit from mentors than men do.

Ten percent of women, mostly at the level of GS 9-12, reported that educational qualifications (or, more likely, a *lack* of educational qualifications) had actually hindered their career advancement. Women in this grade range, overall, have less formal education than men, and those who believe formal educational qualifications were a hindrance in their careers were, for the most part, those without college degrees.

Women, on the other hand, are more likely than men to believe that the opportunity to act in a position(s) prior to appointment, carry out developmental assignments, and complete a formal developmental program or managerial training has helped them in their careers. This finding may imply that these kinds of assignments and training programs have been particularly effective for advancing women, perhaps in giving them an additional opportunity to demonstrate their commitment and competence. It also may imply that women require more opportunities to demonstrate their abilities than do men in order to break down traditional stereotypes of women as less competent as managers than men. (These kinds of perceptions will be discussed in more detail in a later section.) In either case, it would seem that women's career opportunities could be further enhanced through continuation or expansion of these kinds of programs.

The Importance of Mentors

Table 10 also shows that women are somewhat more likely than men to have been helped by "having a senior person/mentor looking out for my interests." This is somewhat surprising since according to conventional wisdom, bolstered by evidence from studies of the private sector,[20] women are less likely to have mentors than men. These studies have shown that people tend to have mentors of their own gender, and there are fewer women in senior positions available to mentor other women. Our survey responses do indicate that men are more likely to mentor men and women are more likely to mentor women. However, as great a percentage of women (48 percent) as men (45 percent) reported that they have had male mentors and more women (41 percent) than men (19 percent) have had female mentors. In the Federal Government, then, it appears that rather than being disadvantaged by a lack of access to mentors, women actually derive more benefit from them than men do.

Making Use of Networks

Networking can also enhance one's potential for advancement. Networking is a broad concept which can include anything from calling upon a colleague for work-related information to developing long-term relationships with present or former work associates. Contacts with a network can be on the job or in the context of social activities.

Studies in the private sector have found evidence that women are often excluded from networks dominated by men, and therefore have less access to information and contacts which could enhance their advancement potential.[21] We were interested in knowing the extent to which a lack of access to networks may contribute to fewer promotions of women in the Federal Government.

Access to Job Opportunities. One way networking aids career advancement is by helping employees make a job change. Often employees, particularly at higher levels, learn about job openings from, or are recommended for jobs by, members of their networks. For example, one woman focus group participant said she found out about opportunities for advancement this way:

> Most of [my advancement opportunities] have been found through networking. I mean when I was ready for a change I would

[20] See, for example, "On the Line: Women's Career Advancement," Catalyst, New York, 1992, p. 27.
[21] Ibid., p. 24-27.

> call people, and in the interim sometimes people would call me and I would go on interviews. * * * The last job that I got was just totally out of the blue. Someone called me, and it was a promotion, and I decided it made sense.

Nonetheless, focus group discussions indicate that many women believe they are undermined by not being included in the kinds of informal relationships that men have with each other. Many women cited sports activities as a medium through which men can develop career-enhancing, informal relationships that women are not privy to. An example of the role sports can play here is given the following comment:

> We have a [high official], his subordinate supervisor, and several of their subordinates who go jogging together. And I'm hearing rumblings from some of the women in the branch that if one of those male subordinates gets an advancement, they're going to see it as quid pro quo for having jogged with their supervisor and their supervisor's supervisor, regardless of whether they discuss business.

We asked men and women in focus group sessions how they had learned about promotional opportunities during their career, and if they thought the process was any different for those of the other gender.

We found, in general, that both men and women had a wide range of experiences in learning about opportunities for advancement, ranging from responding on their own to a vacancy announcement to being recommended for, or referred to, a job by a member of their network. In general, most men and women believe the process is the same for colleagues of the opposite gender.

To try to assess differences in access to jobs on a broader scale, we asked survey participants three questions about how they acquired the job they currently hold. These were: (1) Did you know the person who occupied your current position before you applied for the position? (2) Did you know the supervisor of your current position before you applied for the position? (3) To the best of your knowledge, were other candidates formally considered for your current position at the time you applied?

In general, men and women did not differ significantly in their responses to these questions. For both men and women overall, about half knew the supervisor of the current position, half knew the occupant, and three-quarters said that other candidates were considered at the time they applied. At the GS 9-12 level, women were more likely than men to have known the occupant of the position; i.e., 51 percent of women and only 39 percent of men knew the occupant. At the GS 9-12 level women were also more likely to have known the supervisor of the position before applying; 55 percent of women and 43 percent of men reported that they knew the supervisor.

We also asked survey participants whether the recommendations of friends or acquaintances who knew the selecting official or having friends or acquaintances on the staff of the organizations where they applied had helped their career advancement (see table 10). Women were slightly more likely than men to report that these relationships helped their careers.

We asked those surveyed who had been denied a promotion or developmental opportunity for which they had applied in the last 5 years about why they think they were turned down. As shown in table 11, there is a substantial percentage of respondents who believe that not being "part of the group" was an important reason for being turned down for the promotion or developmental opportunity. However, men are just as likely as women to say that not being "part of the group" was an important reason for their having been denied a developmental opportunity, and men are even more likely to say this was an important reason for having been denied a promotion.

Table 11: How important survey respondents believe not being "part of the group" was when they were denied a promotional opportunity or developmental assignment, by sex

	Percent responding:			
	Somewhat or very important		Of little or no importance	
Importance in being--	Women	Men	Women	Men
Denied a promotion	37	44	56	50
Denied a developmental opportunity	41	41	52	50

Not shown are those responding "Don't know."

We asked survey participants to agree or disagree with the following statement: "Those who participate in social activities (e.g., sports, card games, after-work cocktails) are more likely to be promoted than those who don't." Again, while more than one-third of respondents (37 percent) agreed with the statement, just as great a percentage of men as women were in agreement.

There is, then, a substantial minority of men and women who believe that exclusion from a particular group or network can hinder their promotion potential. We cannot evaluate the extent to which this perception is justified. But what is important for the purposes of this study is that women are no more likely to believe they have been impeded by this process than men.

The Indirect Effects of Networking on Career Advancement. Direct access to a promotion is not the only benefit that a network can provide, in the long run, to career advancement. Discussions during the focus groups indicated that many women believe men are able to take advantage of the informal relationships they develop with other men to gain access to information or superiors in the chain of command. It is possible that greater access can help the man do a better job or gain recognition that may ultimately *indirectly* enhance his potential for advancement. For this reason some women believe they are disadvantaged, relative to men, in pursuing their career objectives. The following comments from focus group participants express this viewpoint:

> While the competition must be fairly equal for men and women entering the executive levels, once the male and female executives are in place then their potential for growth and advancement changes because of the [tendency for] the males in the organization to favor the other male executives and help them along. And this is where the old boys network really revs up and where men begin to find opportunities for other men, point out to them other options, and [as a result the men] move more rapidly once they enter than women have a tendency to.

And:

> When new men come on board oftentimes they are brought into the fold, told things, they are guided along, and this doesn't happen with a woman. She is brought in and she's greeted and everything, but she's not necessarily brought into the fold and told everything about it and given all these helpful little hints.

Some of the men who participated in focus groups acknowledged that men tend to form informal relationships with each other in which women may not be included. The following comment from a senior executive participant is an example:

> It's just easier to talk to a guy even if you don't know him, compared to a woman. I mean there are just certain things that you automatically think that you and the other guy have in common, and you automatically think that you and the woman do not have in common. It could be the basketball game the night before * * * or something of that nature and [by talking to him about it] you get to know the guy * * *. You tend not to do that with a female.

Certainly, there are men as well as women who believe they are excluded from informal networks, as some of the responses to the survey questions presented previously in table 11 demonstrate. But are these networks gender-based? When asked on the survey about whom they rely on for informal help with work projects or information about the organization, only 21 percent of men said they rely more on men than women, to at least some extent. The same percentage of women said they rely on women more than men for informal help or information. Men were slightly more likely (28 percent) than women (21 percent) to say that they rely on colleagues of their own gender for career advice. Still, these responses do not support the notion that either men or women are isolated in gender-based groups which serve as the primary source for work-related information and advice.

It is reasonable to believe, as many women do, that people are often more comfortable asking informally for information from people with whom they have friendly relationships than from those with whom they are less well-acquainted. And, to the extent that men feel more comfortable developing friendly relationships with other men, and to the extent that more men are in senior positions, women may have less access to that information and may be at a disadvantage.

However, there is little evidence to suggest that this is a significant or widespread disadvantage which would account to any great degree for women getting fewer promotions than men. Nevertheless, managers should be aware that many Federal employees (including those in management ranks) believe that informal relationships play an inordinate role in the career advancement process. This appears to be an issue which troubles as many men as women.

Survey responses do not support the notion that either men or women are isolated in gender-based groups which serve as the primary source for work-related information and advice.

STEREOTYPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND PERCEPTIONS

While men and women apparently have a common impression of the disadvantages of being excluded from informal work relationships, men and women do not always share the same perception of dynamics operating in the work environment. During the focus group discussions, many women reported their beliefs about how they are perceived at work.

Many women think that certain stereotypes, attitudes, and expectations operate to make it more difficult for them to do their jobs. If their observations are correct, it is possible that these attitudes toward women can work as subtle barriers which limit recognition of their abilities and potential and their effectiveness on the job. Even if these observations are not correct, they can have an impact on the women who hold them, and thus indirectly affect their morale and their confidence in their ability to succeed.

Holding Women to Higher Standards

One of the most commonly held beliefs by women is that they must jump over higher hurdles in proving their ability than their male peers. The following statement made by a woman senior executive during a focus group conveys this impression:

> I still think that women have to prove through their dealing with people that they are competent and reliable. With men, I think, it is assumed [they are competent] and they have to prove they are not.

On the survey, we asked men and women to express the extent to which they thought that managers in their organizations believe that women are incompetent until they prove themselves competent. Thirty-four percent of women and 7 percent of men thought that this was true to some or a great extent. When we asked survey participants for their opinion on the same issue with regard to men, only 5 percent of women and 8 percent of men thought men were presumed incompetent to some or a great extent.

Similarly, many women also believe that they are held to a higher standard of performance than men and that an error made by a woman receives much more notice than would the same error made by a man. The following comment by a focus group participant represents this perception:

> You're allowed fewer mistakes if you're a woman. You can only blow it once. You don't get to blow it again and again the way men do so you must constantly weigh every step.

Related to this perception is the belief held by many women in high-level jobs that they are viewed by their male peers as having advanced because they are women rather than because of their qualifications. There was unanimous agreement in one focus group of women when one participant made the following comment:

> When I was hired, I was the first woman. They were looking for a woman and they hired me. So when you get to that situation, you are perceived differently because you're immediately discounted [because they think] that the only reason you got there is because you are a woman.

If a woman lacks the full respect of her peers and subordinates, or even thinks she lacks that respect, it can make her job much more difficult, and place limits on her effectiveness. To try to assess how much justification there may be for a perception of lack of respect we asked survey participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "In general, in my organization women have been placed in positions beyond their level of competence because of affirmative employment programs." Nearly half of men (41 percent) and one-fifth (20 percent) of women agreed with the statement. That so many employees believe that women are not competent to hold their positions is evidence that there is some justification for the perception by many women that they are not fully respected.

Another barrier reported over and over by women, both inside and outside of the Government, is a phenomenon that occurs at meetings. Specifically, women believe that points they raise in meetings are often discounted or even ignored. A female focus group participant made the following observation:

> It doesn't happen to me as much anymore, but I've seen it happen to other women in my organization. They can sit around the table and then say something and nobody comments on [what they say] and then, a minute later, some man will say exactly the same thing and everyone will say, that's a great idea.

This is a perception on the part of many women which men don't necessarily accept. A male focus group participant offered this explanation:

> I can't think of a man around this table who hasn't had an idea picked up by someone else at the table and fed back and adopted. That's just part of the game and, in fact, there's a little management trick * * * where you try to tempt your supervisor into doing exactly that so that your supervisor will do what you want to do. You basically make it their idea. * * * I can't picture a GS 14 or 15 or SES woman who wouldn't speak up at a meeting—at least in the Civil Service. * * * It goes with the job and they can't hold back. If they hold back, they won't be GS 14's or 15's or SES'ers.

We were interested in knowing the extent to which these kinds of perceptions about the respect women receive at work are held by women and men Governmentwide at the GS 9-15 and senior executive levels. Therefore, we included several statements in our survey that we asked participants to agree or disagree with. Figure 8 shows the percentage of men and women agreeing with each statement. As is apparent, in each case there is at least a substantial minority of women who share the observations of the female focus group participants quoted above. While some men agree with the women, for the most part, they have a very different view of these workplace interactions.

Limits on Career Choices

Many women also believe they are encouraged by mentors and supervisors to stay in staff positions rather than move to line positions. Then, when they apply for promotions they are not as competitive as men who have line experience. Studies of employment practices of men and women in the private sector, including the Department of Labor's glass ceiling study, have found that women are more often found in staff positions. One focus group participant said the following:

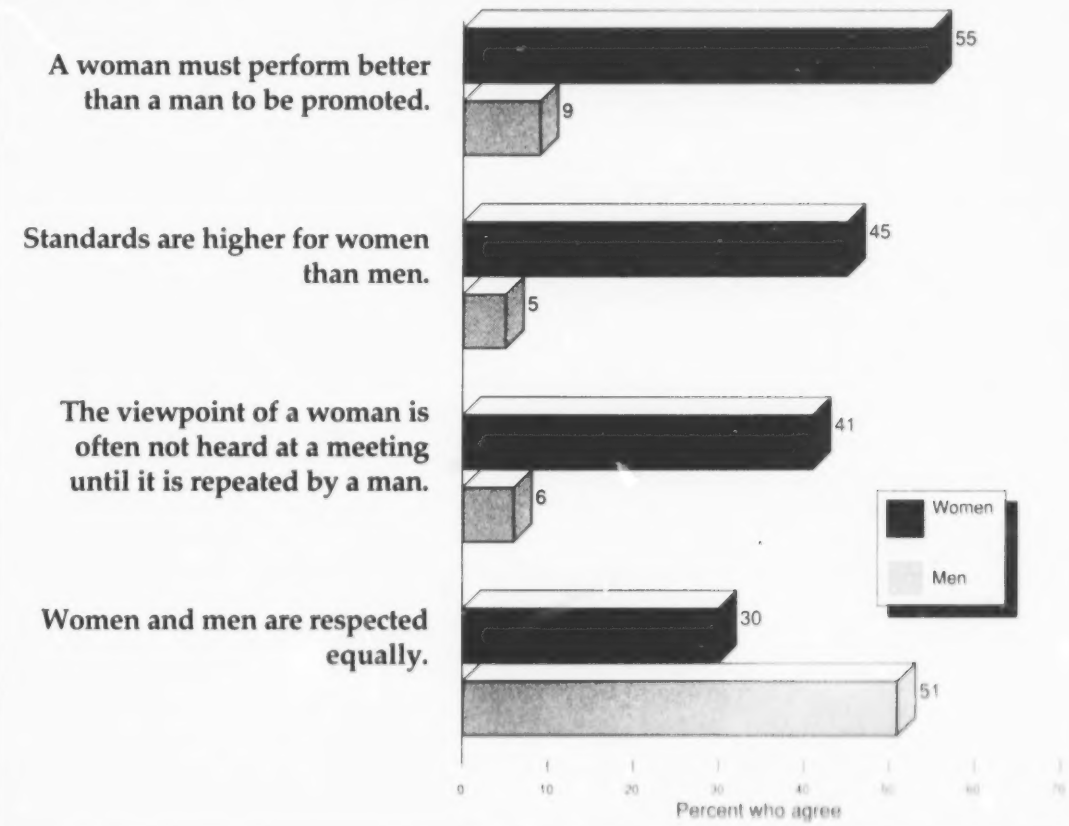
> Women are programmed into staff positions because it's assumed those are more nurturing kinds of position, and more suitable for women and they're directed away from the line positions. Then they get to a certain point in their careers where they need line experience in order to move up, they look back, and find they don't have that experience because they had been programmed into these staff positions.

Survey responses indicate that 25 percent of women (and 9 percent of men) believe that managers expect women to be better suited to staff positions to at least some extent, and about 22 percent of men and women do not know if managers believe this or not. While just over half of women surveyed do not perceive these limited managerial expectations of their career potential, the 25 percent who do believe they face such constraints is a significant minority whose views deserve consideration.

How Important Are Perceptions?

Research has shown that men and women often see the world through different lenses; i.e., they have different expectations and interpretations of circumstances and events.[22] We don't know the extent to which women's perceptions, as reported

Figure 8: Perceptions of Female and Male Survey Respondents



[22] See, for example, Deborah Tannen, "You Just Don't Understand," Ballentine Books, New York, 1990.

If a woman assumes a job which is thought of as requiring male attributes, she is often expected to fail both by herself and others.

in this section, stem from real differences in the way they are treated by colleagues and the extent to which they result from differing orientations that men and women bring to the workplace.

For a number of reasons, women's perceptions as to how they are regarded at work should be taken seriously. First, a number of studies have shown that stereotyping is a real phenomenon which acts as a barrier to women at work.[23] Research has shown that jobs are commonly sex-typed as male or female, depending on which sex has traditionally dominated the job. If a woman assumes a job which is thought of as requiring male attributes, she is often expected to fail both by herself and others.

Second, this kind of stereotyping is magnified in a situation where a particular group, in this case women, is in the minority. Studies have shown that women are judged to be even less qualified and have less potential when they are few in number. They are more visible, and so are their mistakes. When women are recognized for their work when they are in the minority, the recognition is more likely to be attributed to their gender than to their own accomplishments. When many women are present in a given situation, the diversity among them is much more likely to be obvious.[24]

Finally, we do know that women have been less successful at moving into senior levels than men, and that not all of the limitations on their success can be explained by demographic factors such as education, length of service, and mobility. To the extent that women are aware of the constraints they are facing, their productivity, confidence, and likelihood of applying for promotions may be diminished. While some women see these constraints as a challenge to be overcome, many more women want to avoid putting themselves in a position where their mistakes rather than their accomplishments may be recognized, and where the expectation is that they will fail.

What is most important is the effect these perceptions and ostensible stereotypes have on women's effectiveness on the job and their job satisfaction. One senior executive focus group participant observed that although he did not believe women operated within such constraints, "It doesn't matter, the perception is there. You've got a fundamentally unhappy employee who feels that she is limited."

Because of such effects, managers should look for expressions of unsupportable attitudes and stereotypes that may serve to constrain women, and work to curtail these beliefs. Also, managers should examine their own practices and ensure that they themselves are giving women, as well as men, assignments which will highlight their abilities, rather than reinforce stereotypes (an example of the latter being to always assign a woman responsibility for the office Christmas party).

Managers should be aware that appointing one woman to an all-male task force may strengthen stereotypes, while appointing several women can help to weaken stereotypes and help women to feel less isolated. But managers should also be aware that even if stereotypes and constraints are not operating, women may believe they are. As these perceptions can be just as damaging, managers should address the perceptions as well.

[23] See, for example, Madeline E. Heilman, "Sex bias in work settings: the lack of a fit model," in L.L. Cummings and Barry M. Staw, eds., "Research in Organizational Behavior," vol. 5, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, 1983, pp. 269-298.

[24] Ibid. Also see Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "Men and Women of the Corporation," Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1977; and Jennifer Crocker and Kathleen M. McGraw, "What's Good for the Goose is Not Good for the Gander," American Behavioral Scientists, vol. 27, No. 3, January/February 1984, pp. 357-369.

MINORITY WOMEN

Although there is evidence that members of minority groups also face barriers in career advancement, the focus of this study is on women. That is because we believe that the obstacles to advancement are complex in nature, probably not the same for women and minorities, and that a single study focusing on both women and minorities would not be able to provide enough depth. Therefore, MSPB has a separate study in progress to analyze the glass ceiling as it affects minorities in the Government. For the purposes of this study, however, we will discuss our findings as to how the experience of minority women[25] may be different from that of nonminority women.

Demographic Differences

In a previous section of this report, we noted that women overall are underrepresented in Federal senior-level jobs in that the percentage of women at this level is significantly lower than the percentage of women in Professional and Administrative occupations in the Government. But how does the representation of minority women compare to the representation of nonminority women?

Nonminority women hold about 26 percent, and minority women 10 percent, of Professional and Administrative jobs in the Government. While nonminority women hold about 10 percent of senior executive and 16 percent of GS/GM 13-15 jobs, minority women hold less than 2 percent of senior executive jobs and only 4 percent of GS/GM 13-15 jobs. That nonminority women hold 2 times as many Professional and Administrative jobs but hold 3 times as many GS/GM 13-15 jobs and five times as many SES jobs indicates that minority women are even more poorly represented in top-level jobs in the Government than are nonminority women.

Career Advancement Factors

Data from our survey suggest that minority women have had less opportunity for advancement than nonminority women. Table 12 shows the average number of promotions received by minority and nonminority women who entered the Government at the same grade level, accounting for length of Government service and amount of formal education. Not only is the average number of promotions for women lower than the average number received by men, but the average number of promotions received by minority *women is* also less than the average number received by nonminority women. The differences are significant.

Table 12: Average number of promotions for minority and nonminority survey respondents, by sex, accounting for length of Government service and education

	Women	Men
Minority	3.22	3.63
Nonminority	3.41	3.85

[25] "Minorities," in this report, are those employees who identified themselves as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, or Hispanic.

Survey data suggest that minority women have had less opportunity for advancement than nonminority women.

Examination of the factors that we found to be related to the attainment of high grades reveals little difference between minority and nonminority women in the survey population. According to the CPDF, minority women in Professional and Administrative jobs have a slightly longer average length of Federal service (14.4 years) than nonminority women (13.5 years). Our survey data show that both groups have about the same amount of education, devote the same amount of time to their jobs, have relocated as often, and have taken about the same number of leaves of absence.

One way the two groups do differ is that more minority women have had children during their career (77 percent of minority women and 65 percent of nonminority women.) But even this does not explain the discrepancy in probability of promotion. Even minority women without children have been promoted, on average, fewer times than nonminority women without children.

Neither does a lack of commitment to the job explain the discrepancy in promotion rates for minority women. Table 13 shows the responses of minority and nonminority women to statements indicative of commitment to the job. Minority women are even more willing than nonminority women to devote whatever time is necessary to advance their careers, and express equal commitment to, and enthusiasm about, their jobs as nonminority women. As great a percentage of minority women as nonminority women are planning to apply for promotion within the next 3 to 5 years.

Women, on average, receive fewer promotions during their careers than men, and we know that all of this difference cannot be explained by their relative qualifications. However, survey data show minority women are promoted even less often than nonminority women, a difference which cannot be accounted for either by qualifications or by gender alone.

Table 13: Percent of female survey participants responding to statements about job commitment and future plans, by minority and nonminority status

	Percent responding to some or a great extent:	
Statement	Minority Women	Nonminority Women
I am willing to devote whatever time is necessary to my job in order to advance my career.	86	75
I am very committed to my job.	96	95
I am always enthusiastic about my job.	89	90
Percent who are planning to apply for promotion within the next three to five years.	74	70

Perceptions

Minority women are as likely to perceive discrimination based on gender as are nonminority women. But a significant portion of minority women also believe they face discrimination based on race or national origin.

For example, nearly the same percentage of minority and nonminority women said that *gender* has hindered their career advancement in the Government (29 percent of minority women and 21 percent of nonminority women), but 29 percent of minority women also said that *race or national origin* has hindered their career advancement.

A slightly higher percentage of minority women than nonminority women thought that their gender would have a negative effect on their chances of being selected for promotion (33 percent of minority and 25 percent of nonminority women), but 34 percent of minority women also thought that race or national origin would have a negative effect on their chances for promotion.

More than half of minority women surveyed do not believe they receive the same amount of respect as men in their organizations.

Table 14 shows the percentages of minority and nonminority women who disagreed with various statements about their experiences with fair treatment within organizations and by managers in their organizations. Responses to these statements indicate that minority women are less likely than nonminority women to believe that equitable treatment is accorded men and women at work. More than half of minority women surveyed do not believe they receive the same amount of respect as men in their organizations.

Table 14: Percent of female survey respondents disagreeing with statements about equitable treatment in the workplace, by minority and nonminority status

	Percent disagreeing:	
Statement	Minority Women	Nonminority Women
In general, in my organization. . .		
Women and men are respected equally	60	51
People are promoted based on their competence	35	20
	Percent responding to little or no extent:	
Statement	Minority Women	Nonminority Women
In general, I think that managers in my organization believe. . .		
People should be rewarded based on their performance, regardless of whether they are men or women	25	16
Women and men can perform the same work equally well	32	25

Summary

Although our study was not designed to provide for indepth examination of the barriers to advancement as they affect minority women, there is some evidence that minority women are disadvantaged both by their gender and their race or national origin.

Minority women are promoted less often than nonminority women, even when they have the same amount of formal education and Government experience. Minority women are also less likely than nonminority women to believe that they receive the same respect as men, that promotions are based on competence, and that rewards are based on performance.

We don't know the extent to which the perceptions of minority women are justified, but it is likely that at least some minority women may be discouraged from contributing their maximum effort to their organizations. The result is a cost to the Government in terms of lost productivity and credibility as an employer that is apparently even more severe than the cost with respect to nonminority women.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

A glass ceiling does exist in the Federal Government. It consists, in part, of factors that women can control, such as their education, experience, and mobility. It also consists of factors outside of women's control such as unfounded judgments about their lack of job commitment and their ability to do their jobs well.

Increasing the representation of women in higher graded jobs is a slow process. Only a small percentage of employees in higher graded jobs are promoted to the next level each year. More importantly, promotion rates for women in GS 9 and GS 11 jobs in Professional occupations are lower than for men in those jobs. This disparity has a significant impact on the number of women in higher graded jobs, as the GS 9-11 grades are the gateway between entry-level jobs and senior-level jobs for most employees.

Managers have traditionally relied on both formal and informal criteria in evaluating a candidate for a promotion, developmental program, or significant work assignment. In addition to looking at qualifications such as experience and education, many managers consider an employee's commitment to his or her career and desire for advancement. While it is certainly useful to consider these factors, care must be taken to use valid indicators reasonably related to future job success.

Assumptions are often made, for example, that an employee who devotes extra time to the job each week, above and beyond 40 hours, is automatically more committed, more career-oriented, and generally a better employee than one who devotes "only" 40 hours a week. Without tying in productivity and output, however, this could easily be a wrong assumption in any given situation. It's certainly possible for a well-organized, highly capable 40-hour-a-week employee to consistently outproduce a less capable, less organized 50-hour-a-week employee. Stated another way, productivity and contributions to the organization are better indicators of job commitment than mere time spent on the job.

A glass ceiling does exist in the Federal Government.

Similarly, assumptions are often made that an employee who has relocated geographically for job-related reasons is a better candidate for promotion than one who has not. In some cases this may be true, but in others it is probably not. Without a demonstrated link between geographic mobility and the ability to perform a particular job, this assumption may be invalid and can have negative consequences for women. Women often bear a greater share of family responsibilities and, for this reason, some women have less flexibility than men with regard to their personal time and mobility, (while still others are simply assumed to have less flexibility). Therefore, the use of this criterion, when it is not appropriate, can improperly result in fewer women being promoted. This can occur despite the fact that women are as interested as men in advancing their careers and, on average, receive performance ratings equal to those obtained by men.

A significant number of women believe that they confront other attitudes and stereotypes which make it more difficult for them to do their jobs and advance in their careers. These include assump-

The Government is dedicated to ensuring it has a diverse workforce, and equal opportunity for advancement for all employees. These objectives are not being met in full, largely because of a subtle, almost invisible, glass ceiling.

tions that women, in general, don't have the necessary qualifications for their jobs and have been advanced only to achieve affirmative action goals. Women's perceptions are not without basis, as our survey results and other studies have shown that such stereotypes often do exist. And some research shows that such impressions of women are even more likely to occur when women are few in number in a particular job or situation.

These kinds of stereotypes can create an environment that curtails women's effectiveness, self-confidence, and job satisfaction. To the extent that perceptions or stereotypes have such an effect, some women may be reluctant to pursue promotional opportunities, thereby increasing the probability that women will remain few in number in top-level jobs.

Our data also suggest that minority women face a double disadvantage. They are promoted even less often than nonminority women with the same amount of formal education and Government experience. In many cases, minority women feel the effects of what they perceive to be gender-based disparate treatment at work even more acutely than nonminority women.

The extent to which these factors operate almost certainly varies from agency to agency and among organizations within each agency. The results presented in this study represent effects occurring, in general, across Government. While we did not find isolation from informal networks of men to be a barrier to women's advancement in Government overall, for example, such exclusionary networks could well exist in some organizations. Similarly, it is highly unlikely that all organizations value geographic relocations equally.

The Government is dedicated to ensuring it has a diverse workforce, and equal opportunity for advancement for all employees. These objectives are not being met in full, largely because of a subtle, almost invisible, glass ceiling. The opportunity to eliminate the underrepresentation of women in top-level jobs exists now, more than ever, as more women than men are entering the Federal workforce. Given the slow process of career advancement, all Federal agencies need to begin now to make a determined effort to eliminate barriers and ensure that women have opportunities to advance in their careers.

If women entering Government today are to see parity in senior-level jobs by the time they retire from their Federal careers, agencies must take concerted action to break the glass ceiling. Our forecasting model shows that given current trends, women will continue to represent less than one-third of the Government's senior executives 25 years into the future. As long as women are in the minority in top-level jobs, stereotypes that limit their effectiveness and make it more difficult for them to advance are likely to remain in force. Traditional criteria for evaluating commitment to the job and advancement potential have helped to perpetuate this cycle. Unless efforts are made to reexamine these criteria and to reduce the effect of stereotypes, women will continue to be constrained in their efforts to advance, and the Government will continue to underutilize a valuable resource.

As long as women are in the minority in top-level jobs, stereotypes that limit their effectiveness and make it more difficult for them to advance are likely to remain in force.

Recommendations

- **The Government should reaffirm its commitment to equal employment opportunity in the Civil Service and each Federal agency should make special efforts to increase the representation of women in senior positions.**

In accordance with the objectives set forth in the Civil Service Reform Act, agencies should ensure that women are actively recruited to apply for higher graded job vacancies. Concerted efforts involving all managers and supervisors, personnel and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officers, and Federal Women's Program Managers, will be required.

Women hold less than half of all Professional and Administrative jobs above grade GS 9, and less than one-quarter of these jobs above grade GS 12. In addition, promotions above the midlevel into supervisory and management levels do not occur very often. For these reasons, recruitment for higher graded jobs may need to be expanded beyond the usual area of consideration in order to ensure that the applicant pool includes a sufficient number of women.

Without an active effort to increase the representation of women at senior levels, women are likely to remain in the minority in these jobs for many years to come. Even greater efforts need to be made to increase the representation of minority women at senior levels.

- **Managers should reexamine the formal and informal criteria they use to evaluate employees' potential for advancement, especially when these criteria are used in making selections for developmental training, career-enhancing work assignments, and promotions.**

Managers should reexamine the assumptions that may be underlying their decisions as to whom to develop. They should ensure they are evaluating employees' promotion potential based on the quality and quantity of their work, and stated interest in advancement, rather than their availability to work overtime or to relocate, unless there is a specific reason to do so. Managers should ensure that they are not making unwarranted assumptions that career advancement is incompatible with family responsibilities, thereby forcing employees to choose between the two.

- **Managers should seek to curtail, within themselves and their organizations, any expressions of stereotypes or attitudes which create an environment hostile to the advancement of women.**

A substantial minority of women believe that their competence is unfairly doubted by those they work with. Previous research on stereotypes and sex-typing of jobs demonstrates the pervasiveness and detrimental effects of these perceptions. Managers should look for, and work to preclude, in themselves and throughout their organizations, expression of these stereotypes and other behavior which may fuel women's perceptions that they are not valued or respected.

Managers should give qualified women opportunities to demonstrate their abilities in jobs and assignments traditionally associated with men, as well as ensuring that women are not always given assignments or roles traditionally associated with women. They should be aware that in situations where women are very few in number, they are often viewed as "tokens," and stereotypes may be reinforced. Assuring participation by several women on a task force or in a meeting can highlight the diversity among women and help to diminish stereotypes.

- **Women should take full advantage of opportunities to increase their competitiveness and demonstrate their abilities, and agencies should make these opportunities available.**

Women should increase their own advancement potential by taking advantage of opportunities to do so within and outside the Government. Education is an important factor in career advancement, and, where possible, women should consider pursuing additional education.

A majority of women who responded to the survey also reported that specialized or technical training, formal developmental programs or managerial training, developmental assignments, the opportunity to act in a position prior to appointment, and/or having a mentor had helped them in their career advancement. Agencies should make these programs and opportunities available to women wherever possible, and women who wish to advance should seek them out. Some of these programs provide opportunities for women to demonstrate their abilities and thus reduce their own and others' perceptions that women are not as competent as men.

- **Agencies should conduct their own assessment of barriers to advancement for women.**

The conclusions stated in this report are based on a Governmentwide assessment of the career advancement process. In recognition of the diversity of Federal agencies, and subunits within agencies, the Board recommends that each agency and/or agency subunit use the broad findings outlined in this report to develop studies of the career advancement process and the effects of any glass ceiling that may exist in their organization.

Agencies and subunits, in consultation with their Federal Women's Program Managers, should develop their own means for assessing barriers within their organizations. But we recommend in addition that they analyze their accession, promotion and separation rates to see whether significantly different rates exist between men and women at any grade level, and, if so, why. They should evaluate the climate within their agencies to determine the extent to which women may be working in an environment which they perceive as hostile to their productivity or advancement.

APPENDIX 1

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
Washington, D.C. 20419

Dear Colleague:

We need your help with a study of career development in the Federal Government. You're part of a relatively small group of Federal employees selected randomly to participate in the survey. Results from this survey will be reported to Congress and the President and made available to the public. Your views will represent those of over 900,000 employees at grades 9 and above. Your answers are important!

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, an independent Federal agency, is responsible for monitoring the health of the Federal personnel system. One of our studies this year involves looking at how employees at upper grade levels have managed their careers, and what factors may aid or impede career advancement. For the survey to reflect the true thoughts and experiences of Federal employees, it is extremely important that all people in this scientific sample complete, and return their questionnaires.

Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. All answers will be combined so that individual responses cannot be identified. It is essential that you do not put your name anywhere on this booklet and do not ask anyone else to fill it out.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed postpaid envelope within 5 days after you receive it. *It should take about 20 to 30 minutes to complete.* If you would like a copy of the report to be published about the survey, please write to us at the address shown on the next page. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Katherine Naff on (202 or FTS) 653-7833.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Evangeline W. Swift

Evangeline W. Swift
Director, Policy and Evaluation

The Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution 1787-1987

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APPENDIX 1

U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board
Washington, DC 20419

SURVEY ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN THE FEDERAL SERVICE

PRIVACY ACT NOTICE

Collection of the requested information is authorized by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. 1205a). The information you provide will be used to evaluate and improve Federal personnel policies and practices. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and none of the information you choose to supply will be associated with you individually.

REPORT REQUEST ADDRESS

If you would like a copy of the report published about the survey, please address your request to:

U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board
Office of Policy and Evaluation
1120 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20419

Note: The report will be available approximately September 1992.

General Directions: Please read the survey Marking Instructions carefully and answer each question in the way that best reflects your personal opinions and experiences. There are no right or wrong answers.

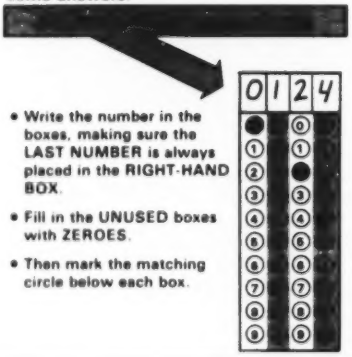
MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- **Make heavy black marks that completely fill the circle.**
- **Erase any changes cleanly and completely.**
- **Do not make any stray marks in this booklet.**
- **Please do not fold this document.**
- **Answer each question except when directed to skip a section.**
- **Read the questions carefully before selecting an answer.**
- **If you select an answer that is not identified in the list of options, write only in the space provided.**

CORRECT MARK ○●○○

INCORRECT MARKS ✓⊗○⊙

You will be asked to give numbers for some answers.



- **Write the number in the boxes, making sure the LAST NUMBER is always placed in the RIGHT-HAND BOX.**
- **Fill in the UNUSED boxes with ZEROES.**
- **Then mark the matching circle below each box.**

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SECTION 1: WORK EXPERIENCE

1. What was the pay plan and grade of your first full-time, permanent, civilian position in the Federal Government?

   a. Pay Plan:

   - GS ○
   - GM ○
   - ES (SES) ○
   - VM, VN, VP or other Title 38 pay plan ○
   - FP or Foreign Service plan ○
   - WG or other blue-collar plan ○
   - Don't know ○
   - Other *(Please specify)* → ○

   b. Pay Grade or Level:

○ 1	○ 6	○ 11	○ 16
○ 2	○ 7	○ 12	○ 17
○ 3	○ 8	○ 13	○ 18
○ 4	○ 9	○ 14	○ Other
○ 5	○ 10	○ 15	○ Don't know

2. What year did you enter Federal service at the grade indicated in question 1?

   Write the year in the boxes. → 19

   Then, darken the matching circles. →

3. What was the job classification series of your first full-time, permanent, civilian job with the Federal Government (e.g., 0334 for computer specialists, 0810 for civil engineers, 0610 for nurses)? Please indicate your job classification series below, placing 0's in front of the number if necessary, to make it four digits.

   ○ Don't know/Can't remember

   Write the number in the boxes. →

   Then, darken the matching circles. →

4. What is your current job classification series? Please indicate your job classification series below, placing 0's in front of the number if necessary, to make it four digits.

   Write the number in the boxes. →

   Then, darken the matching circles. →

5. What year did you enter your current job classification series?

   Write the year in the boxes. → 19

   Then, darken the matching circles. →

6. What is your current pay plan and grade?

   a. Pay Plan:

   - GS ○
   - GM ○
   - ES (SES) ○
   - VM, VN, VP or other Title 38 pay plan ○
   - FP or Foreign Service plan ○
   - WG or other blue-collar plan ○
   - Don't know ○
   - Other *(Please specify)* → ○

   b. Pay Grade or Level:

○ 1	○ 6	○ 11	○ 16
○ 2	○ 7	○ 12	○ 17
○ 3	○ 8	○ 13	○ 18
○ 4	○ 9	○ 14	○ Other
○ 5	○ 10	○ 15	○ Don't know

7. **Which one of the following best describes the nature of your move into your current position?**

- Entry into Government from outside ○
- Lateral reassignment or transfer initiated by management ○
- Lateral reassignment or transfer initiated by you ○
- Career ladder promotion ○
- Temporary promotion ○
- Permanent promotion (other than career ladder) ○
- Downgrade initiated by management ○
- Downgrade you took voluntarily ○
- Other *(Please specify)* → ○

8. **To the best of your knowledge, were other candidates formally considered for your current position at the time you applied?**

- Yes ○
- No ○
- Don't know/Can't remember ○
- Does not apply ○

9. **When you got your current position, was it a:**

- Change to a different agency? ○
- Change to a different organization within the same agency? ○
- Change within the same organization within the same agency? ○
- Entry into Government from outside ○
- Other *(Please specify)* → ○

10. **Did you know the person who occupied your current position before you applied?**

- Yes ○
- No ○
- Not sure/Don't remember ○
- Does not apply ○

11. **Did you know the supervisor of your current position before you applied for the position?**

- Yes ○
- No ○
- Not sure/Don't remember ○
- Does not apply ○

12. **What was the highest level of education that you had completed (a) at the time you got your first full-time, permanent, civilian job with the Government and (b) that you have completed now?**
Mark one response in each column.

	[a] Highest level completed when I got my [illegible]	(b) Highest level of education completed at the present time
Less than high school	○	○
High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)	○	○
Completed associate's degree (e.g., AA)	○	○
Some college, no degree	○	○
Completed bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS)	○	○
Some graduate school, no graduate degree	○	○
Completed master's degree (e.g., MA, MS)	○	○
Completed professional degree (e.g., JD, MD, DDS)	○	○
Completed doctorate (e.g., PhD)	○	○

[redacted]

SECTION 2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT

13. For the items listed below, please indicate the effect you think each has had on your career advancement in the Federal Government. *Please use the following scale for each item listed*

	Not Applicable	Largely Hindered	Somewhat Hindered	No Effect	Helped a Little	Helped a Lot
1. Formal educational qualifications	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. Previous work experience	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Opportunity to act in a position(s) prior to appointment	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. Completion of specialized or technical training	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. Developmental assignments	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. My gender	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. My race/national origin	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. Social/informal contacts with managers in the organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. Having a senior person/mentor looking out for my interests	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. Social/informal contacts with personnel office staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. Contacts through professional association or other formal network	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. Completion of formal developmental program or managerial training	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. My performance or "track" record	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. Recommendation of friends or acquaintances who knew the selecting official	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. Having friends or acquaintances on the staff of the organization(s) where I applied	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. Other *(Please specify)* →	○	○	○	○	○	○

14. From the list of factors shown in question 13, please mark the number of the one *most* important factor in your advancement.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯

15. How many days per month, on average, have you spent on Government travel in the past 2 years?

- 0-5 days/month ○
- 6-10 days/month ○
- 11-15 days/month ○
- 16-20 days/month ○
- More than 20 days/month ○

16. How many hours, on average, have you worked each week during the past 2 years?

- Less than 40 hours/week ○
- 40 hours/week ○
- 41-45 hours/week ○
- 46-50 hours/week ○
- 51-60 hours/week ○
- More than 60 hours/week ○

17. As a Federal employee, have you applied for a promotion in the last 5 years which you did not receive?

- No — *Go to question 20* ○
- Yes ○

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18. **If yes, how important do you believe each of the following factors were in explaining why you did not get the most recent promotion you applied for?** *Please use the following scale for each item listed below.*

	Don't Know	Of No Importance/Doesn't Apply	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important
1. I was not qualified	○	○	○	○	○
2. There were other, more qualified candidates	○	○	○	○	○
3. I did not get along with the selecting official	○	○	○	○	○
4. I did not want to work more than 40 hours per week	○	○	○	○	○
5. My gender	○	○	○	○	○
6. My race/national origin	○	○	○	○	○
7. I wanted a job which normally goes to a woman	○	○	○	○	○
8. I wanted a job which normally goes to a man	○	○	○	○	○
9. I could not change my schedule to accommodate the new position	○	○	○	○	○
10. Someone else had already been "preselected"	○	○	○	○	○
11. I could not relocate	○	○	○	○	○
12. I was pregnant or planning to become pregnant	○	○	○	○	○
13. I had taken maternity/paternity leave	○	○	○	○	○
14. I had taken leave to care for a disabled/ill relative	○	○	○	○	○
15. I had taken leave to pursue my education	○	○	○	○	○
16. I was not "part of the group"	○	○	○	○	○
17. I was unable to travel	○	○	○	○	○
18. My responsibility for my family was viewed as interfering with my ability to do the job	○	○	○	○	○
19. I had poor references	○	○	○	○	○
20. My age	○	○	○	○	○
21. I did not have enough education	○	○	○	○	○
22. I did not have enough experience relevant to the job	○	○	○	○	○
23. Other *(Please specify)* →	○	○	○	○	○

19. **From the list of reasons shown in question 18, which do you believe was the one *most* important reason you did not get the promotion?**

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫
⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲ ⑳ ㉑ ㉒ ㉓

20. **As a Federal employee, have you applied for a developmental opportunity; (e.g., detail, training, special assignment) in the last 5 years which you did not receive?**

No — *Go to question 23* ○
Yes ○

21. **If yes, how important do you believe each of the following factors were in explaining why you did not get the most recent developmental opportunity you applied for?** *Please use the following scale for each item listed below.*

	Don't Know	Of No Importance/Doesn't Apply	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important
1. I was not qualified	○	○	○	○	○
2. There were other, more qualified candidates	○	○	○	○	○
3. My manager/supervisor would not support my application	○	○	○	○	○
4. I did not want to work more than 40 hours per week	○	○	○	○	○
5. My gender	○	○	○	○	○
6. My race/national origin	○	○	○	○	○
7. I applied for a developmental opportunity which normally goes to a woman	○	○	○	○	○
8. I applied for a developmental opportunity which normally goes to a man	○	○	○	○	○
9. Someone else had already been "preselected"	○	○	○	○	○
10. I was pregnant or planning to become pregnant	○	○	○	○	○
11. I had taken maternity/paternity leave	○	○	○	○	○
12. I had taken leave to care for a disabled/ill relative	○	○	○	○	○
13. I had taken leave to pursue my education	○	○	○	○	○
14. I was not "part of the group"	○	○	○	○	○
15. I was unable to travel	○	○	○	○	○
16. My responsibility for my family was viewed as interfering with my ability to complete the assignment	○	○	○	○	○
17. I had poor references	○	○	○	○	○
18. I was not seen as having enough commitment to my career	○	○	○	○	○
19. My age	○	○	○	○	○
20. I did not have enough experience relevant to the assignment	○	○	○	○	○
21. Other *(Please specify)* →	○	○	○	○	○

22. **From the list of reasons shown in question 21, which do you believe was the one *most* important reason you did not get the developmental opportunity?**

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪
⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲ ⑳ ㉑

23. **How many times have you relocated geographically for the sake of your own career since you have been employed as a civilian with the Federal Government?**

- None ○
- Once ○
- Twice ○
- Three times ○
- Four times ○
- Five or more times ○

24. **Have you ever refused to relocate geographically while employed as a civilian with the Federal Government?**

- No — *Go to question 25* ○
- Yes ○

a. **If yes, did it have a negative effect on your career?**

- Yes ○
- No ○
- Don't know Can't judge ○

b. **If you refused to relocate, what was the most important reason for your refusal?**

- Family ○
- Lifestyle ○
- Didn't want to move to the new location ○
- Didn't want the job ○
- Didn't want to leave headquarters ○
- Didn't want to leave the field ○
- Didn't want to leave my current job ○
- Other *(Please specify)* → ○

25 a. **Since entering Federal service, how many absences (paid or unpaid) of more than 6 consecutive weeks have you taken?**

- None — *Go to question 26* ○
- One ○
- Two ○
- Three ○
- Four or more ○

25 b. **If you have taken one or more absences of more than 6 consecutive weeks while employed by the Federal Government, please mark the reasons for these absences.** *Mark all that apply*

- Birth adoption of a child ○
- To pursue education or training ○
- Personal illness ○
- To care for a spouse or other relative ○
- Change in spouse's career ○
- Military reserve duty ○
- Other *(Please specify)* → ○

26. **For the items listed below, please indicate the effect you believe each would have on your chances of being selected for a promotion.**
Please use the following scale for each item.

Not Applicable
Very Negative Effect
Somewhat Negative Effect
No Effect
Somewhat Positive Effect
Very Positive Effect

Hard work	○	○	○	○	○
Ambition	○	○	○	○	○
Gender	○	○	○	○	○
Willingness to work extra hours	○	○	○	○	○
Being with the organization a long time	○	○	○	○	○
Willingness to travel	○	○	○	○	○
Educational background	○	○	○	○	○
Technical expertise	○	○	○	○	○
Race national origin	○	○	○	○	○
Being a good "networker"	○	○	○	○	○
Other *(Please specify)* →	○	○	○	○	○

27. **How likely do you think it is that you will be promoted to a higher grade level in the next 5 years?**

- Very likely ○
- Somewhat likely ○
- Neither likely nor unlikely ○
- Somewhat unlikely ○
- Very unlikely ○

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SECTION 3: FUTURE PLANS

28. Which of the following best describes your plans affecting your career for the next 3 to 5 years? *Mark all that apply.*

- No change planned — *Go to question 31* ○
- Seek promotion within this agency ○
- Seek promotion within Federal Government but in another agency/department ○
- Leave the Federal service to work outside the Federal Government ○
- Retire from the Federal service ○
- Seek reassignment outside this agency at same grade level ○
- Seek reassignment within this agency at same grade level ○
- Take a leave of absence ○
- Resign from my current job ○
- Other *(Please specify)* ○

29. If you plan to make a change in your current job situation in the next 3 to 5 years, how important is each of the following factors in your decision to seek such a change? *Please use the following scale for each item.*

	Of Little Importance			Very Important
1. To get a higher salary	○	○	○	○
2. To gain more experience	○	○	○	○
3. To have more responsibility	○	○	○	○
4. To have a job with more challenge	○	○	○	○
5. To meet family responsibilities	○	○	○	○
6. To alleviate problems with child care	○	○	○	○
7. To find a job I like better	○	○	○	○
8. To pursue the next logical step in my career plan	○	○	○	○
9. To get away from a discriminatory work environment	○	○	○	○
10. To find a supervisor I can work better with	○	○	○	○
11. To pursue educational opportunities	○	○	○	○
12. Other *(Please specify)*	○	○	○	○

30. Of the reasons given in question 29, which one is your *most* important reason for planning a change?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

31. If you are *not* planning a change in your job situation, how important is each of the following in your decision *not* to change? *Please use the following scale for each item.*

	Of Little Importance			Very Important
1. I am satisfied with my current position	○	○	○	○
2. I need more time to gain more experience	○	○	○	○
3. I do not have the education to make a change	○	○	○	○
4. I have reached the highest level for my skills	○	○	○	○
5. I cannot take time away from family responsibilities to devote to a new job	○	○	○	○
6. I do not want added work responsibilities	○	○	○	○
7. I can't find a job with appropriate hours	○	○	○	○
8. I don't think there are other jobs available for which I'm qualified	○	○	○	○
9. I don't want to relocate geographically	○	○	○	○
10. I have not thought about my plans for the next 3 to 5 years	○	○	○	○
11. I don't think I would get a promotion if I applied for one	○	○	○	○
12. Other *(Please specify)*	○	○	○	○

32. Of the reasons given in question 31, which is your one *most* important reason for *not* seeking a change?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

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SECTION 4: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

33. For the following statements, indicate the extent to which each applies to you. *Please use the following scale for each item.*

To No Extent
To Little Extent
To Some Extent
To a Great Extent

I am willing to relocate to advance my career	○○○○
I am willing to devote whatever time is necessary to my job in order to advance my career	○○○○
I am very committed to my job	○○○○
I am always enthusiastic about my job	○○○○
I am, or have been, a mentor for women	○○○○
I am, or have been, a mentor for men	○○○○
I have, or have had, a male mentor(s)	○○○○
I have, or have had, a female mentor(s)	○○○○
I rely more on colleagues of my own sex rather than different-sex colleagues for career advice	○○○○
I rely more on colleagues of my own sex rather than different-sex colleagues for informal help with work projects or information about the organization	○○○○

34. In your experience in your organization, who are more likely to get each of the following? *Mark one response for each.*

Don't know/Can't judge
Neither is more likely than the other
Women are more likely to receive
Men are more likely to receive

a. Promotions	○○○○
b. Significant work assignments	○○○○
c. Training opportunities	○○○○
d. Formal recognition or rewards	○○○○

35. The following are some general statements about worklife in the Federal Government. Based on your experience in your current organization, please mark your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, *using the following scale for each item.*

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

In general, in my organization . . .

Having a mentor is an important part of advancement	○○○○○
It is a disadvantage to have family responsibilities when being considered for a job	○○○○○
Women and men are respected equally	○○○○○
A woman must perform better than a man to be promoted	○○○○○
People are promoted because of whom they know	○○○○○
People are promoted based on their competence	○○○○○
Women have been placed in positions beyond their level of competence because of affirmative employment programs	○○○○○
A person of the opposite sex could not do my job as well as I can	○○○○○
Standards are higher for women than men	○○○○○
Women have made considerable progress in moving into higher level positions in the last 10 years	○○○○○
Those who participate in social activities (e.g., sports, card games, after-work cocktails) are more likely to be promoted than those who don't	○○○○○
The viewpoint of a woman is often not heard at a meeting until it is repeated by a man	○○○○○
Once a woman assumes a top management position, that position often loses much of its power and prestige	○○○○○

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36. **The following are perceptions reported by some people in the Federal Government. Based on your own experiences, to what extent do you believe that managers in your organization hold the following perceptions?** *Please use this scale for each item.*

	Don't know/Can't judge	To No Extent	To Little Extent	To Some Extent	To a Great Extent
In general, I think that managers in my organization believe ...					
People should be rewarded based on their performance, regardless of whether they are men or women		○	○	○	○
Men are the primary income providers, and so are more deserving of promotions than women		○	○	○	○
Women are incompetent until they prove themselves competent		○	○	○	○
Men are incompetent until they prove themselves competent		○	○	○	○
Women are more suited to staff than line positions		○	○	○	○
Men are more suited to staff than line positions		○	○	○	○
Women and men can perform the same work equally well		○	○	○	○

SECTION 5: GENERAL INFORMATION

37. **Which of the following are you?** *Mark one response only.*
- Nonsupervisor ○
- First-line supervisor (i.e., you sign performance appraisals of other employees) ○
- Second or higher level supervisor ○

38. **What is your sex?**
- Male ○
- Female ○

39. **What is your race/national origin?**
- American Indian/Alaskan Native ○
- Asian/Pacific Islander ○
- Black ○
- Hispanic ○
- White/non-Hispanic ○
- Other ○

40. **What is the sex of your immediate supervisor?**
- Male ○
- Female ○

41. **Who do you work with during a normal day, excluding support staff?**
- All men ○
- More men than women ○
- About the same numbers of men and women ○
- More women than men ○
- All women ○

42. **Where do you currently work?**
- Headquarters ○
- Regional office ○
- Field location ○

43. **Where have you spent most of your career?**
- Headquarters ○
- Regional office ○
- Field location ○
- Outside of Federal service (e.g., State/local government, private sector) ○
- About the same amount of time in two or more of the above ○

44. **What is your age?**

Under 20	○	50-54	○
20-29	○	55-59	○
30-39	○	60-64	○
40-49	○	65 or older	○

45. **How many years of (civilian) Federal Government experience do you have?**

Less than 1 year	○	15-20 years	○
1-5 years	○	20-25 years	○
5-10 years	○	25-30 years	○
10-15 years	○	More than 30 years	○

46. **How many years of employment experience do you have in your current profession outside of the Federal Government?**
- No experience outside Federal Government ○

Less than 1 year	○	15-20 years	○
1-5 years	○	20-25 years	○
5-10 years	○	25-30 years	○
10-15 years	○	More than 30 years	○

47. **What was your most recent performance rating?**
- Level 1 (e.g., Unacceptable or Unsatisfactory) ○
- Level 2 (e.g., Minimally Successful or Minimally Satisfactory) ○
- Level 3 (e.g., Fully Successful) ○
- Level 4 (e.g., Exceeds Fully Successful or Exceeds Fully Satisfactory) ○
- Level 5 (e.g., Outstanding) ○
- Have not had rating/Don't remember ○

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48. Which agency do you currently work for?

- Agriculture ○
- Commerce ○
- Defense
  - Air Force ○
  - Army ○
  - Navy ○
  - Other DoD ○
- Education ○
- Energy ○
- Environmental Protection Agency ○
- General Services Administration ○
- Health and Human Services ○
- Housing and Urban Development ○
- Interior ○
- Justice ○
- Labor ○
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration ○
- Office of Personnel Management ○
- Small Business Administration ○
- State ○
- Transportation ○
- Treasury ○
- Veterans Affairs ○
- Other ○

49. Which agency have you worked for the longest?

- Agriculture ○
- Commerce ○
- Defense
  - Air Force ○
  - Army ○
  - Navy ○
  - Other DoD ○
- Education ○
- Energy ○
- Environmental Protection Agency ○
- General Services Administration ○
- Health and Human Services ○
- Housing and Urban Development ○
- Interior ○
- Justice ○
- Labor ○
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration ○
- Office of Personnel Management ○
- Small Business Administration ○
- State ○
- Transportation ○
- Treasury ○
- Veterans Affairs ○
- Other ○
- About the same amount of time in two or more of the above ○

50. To your knowledge, does your agency currently have a Federal Women's Program?

- Yes ○
- No ○
- Don't know / Not sure ○

51. Have you completed, or are you in the process of completing, an SES candidate development program?

- Yes — I have completed an SES candidate development program ○
- Yes — I am in the process of completing an SES candidate development program ○
- No — I never completed an SES candidate development program ○

Research has shown that living arrangements can have an impact on people's career development. We would appreciate your answering the following questions about your living arrangements at home during your Federal career.

52. Have you had children living with you at any time during your Federal career?

- No — *Go to question 56* ○
- Yes ○

53. If yes, what was the greatest number of children you had living with you during your Federal career, and how many are living with you now?
Mark one response in each column.

	At the Present Time	During my Federal Career
No children	○	○
One or two children	○	○
Three or four children	○	○
More than four children	○	○

54. During your Federal career, which age group(s) of children have lived with you? *Mark all that apply.*

I have had living with me:

- Pre-school age children ○
- Elementary school age children ○
- Secondary school age children ○
- College age children ○

55. Right now, which age group(s) of children live with you? *Mark all that apply.*

I have currently living with me:

- Pre-school age children ○
- Elementary school age children ○
- Secondary school age children ○
- College age children ○

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56. **Did you have elderly or disabled persons living with you requiring your care during most of your Federal career and do you now?** *Mark one response in each column.*

	At the Present Time	During most of my Federal Career
Yes	○	○
No	○	○

57. **Have you lived with a spouse or other adult during most of your Federal career and do you now?** *Mark one response in each column.*

	At the Present Time	During most of my Federal Career
Living with spouse or other adult	○	○
Living without spouse or other adult	○	○

58. **If you have dependents requiring care, would you say that you had or have *primary* responsibility for their care on a day-to-day basis?** *Mark one response in each column.*

	At the Present Time	During most of my Federal Career
I had no/have no dependents to care for	○	○
I had/have primary responsibility	○	○
Responsibility was/is split 50/50 between myself and another adult	○	○
No — my spouse or another adult had/has primary responsibility	○	○

SECTION 6: COMMENTS

Do you have any comments on barriers to advancement for men and women in the Federal service?

When you have completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the prepaid envelope and return it to the private contractor who is processing the results.

Return to: Research Applications, Incorporated
414 Hungerford Drive, Suite 210
Rockville, MD 20850-4125

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

P4797 PFI 54321

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APPENDIX 2

Percent of PATCO Categories Filled by Women, by Agency, FY 1990

	Professional	Administrative	Technical	Clerical	Other
Governmentwide	31	38	54	86	12
Agriculture	17	46	37	94	59
Commerce	19	43	42	89	25
DOD:					
Air Force	26	36	49	88	7
Army	26	37	51	83	7
Navy	19	42	43	85	8
Other DOD	33	33	68	87	8
Education	45	55	80	89	100
Energy	18	39	63	95	13
EPA	30	51	72	95	57
GSA	41	40	66	86	9
HHS	46	58	81	89	46
HUD	28	47	85	90	*
Interior	16	36	43	91	29
Justice	35	27	64	87	8
Labor	31	39	38	90	64
NASA	16	45	28	98	35
OPM	42	47	77	87	46
SBA	30	35	87	88	*
State	25	42	33	92	*
Transportation	18	19	25	94	35
Treasury	35	25	74	86	18
Veterans Affairs	64	39	64	77	5
All Other Agencies	30	41	69	87	18

*Less than 1 percent
Source: CPDF

APPENDIX 3

Percent of Each Grade Range Filled by Women, by Agency, FY 1990

	GS 1-4	GS 5-8	GS 9-12	GS 13-15	SES (and equivalent)
Governmentwide	76	71	38	18	11
Agriculture	81	60	23	15	10
Commerce	78	75	33	17	9
DOD:					
Air Force	82	72	32	12	6
Army	75	68	34	14	5
Navy	72	68	29	13	3
Other DOD	77	79	34	22	8
Education	77	86	62	41	25
Energy	74	81	43	16	9
EPA	84	87	48	28	16
GSA	80	69	45	27	16
HHS	85	85	63	31	21
HUD	84	88	50	30	15
Interior	75	66	26	13	10
Justice	79	62	32	15	7
Labor	82	83	36	25	18
NASA	55	78	34	12	5
OPM	83	75	51	33	31
SBA	83	88	41	21	22
State	79	82	44	23	14
Transportation	71	72	21	11	12
Treasury	83	78	47	22	10
Veterans Affairs	70	70	65	22	8
All Other Agencies	72	76	52	26	14

Source: CPDF

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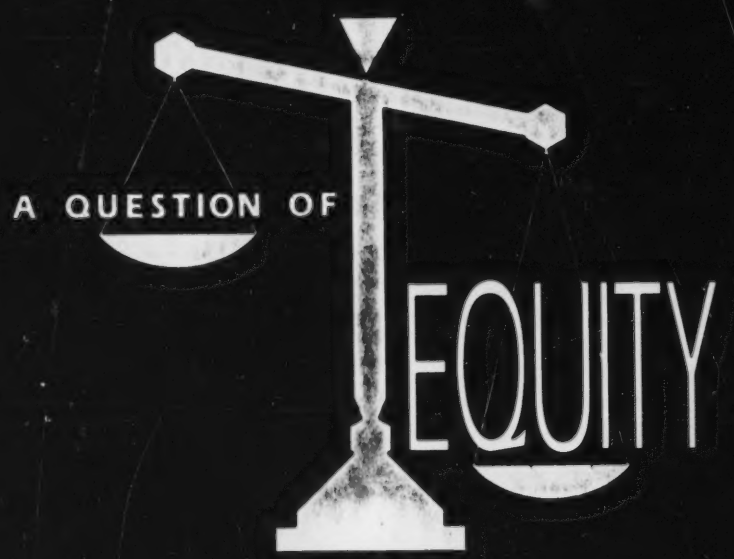

A QUESTION OF EQUITY

Women and the GLASS CEILING

A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

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